TAINTED GRAIL
KINGS OF RUIN
RULEBOOK
AWAKEN REALMS

Component List

Some cards and components are located in a sealed Open & Play deck, in the Secret envelope, or hidden at the start of the game.
For more details on what these cards and components are, see "Component Spoilers" in the Secret Rules section on page 41.

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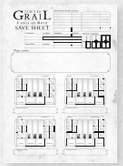
4 starting letters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Plastic Components

1 regular Die

1 guardian Die

1 Duration Die

4 Health markers

80 universal markers

20 Large Universal markers

6 Quest markers

20 Dark Time markers

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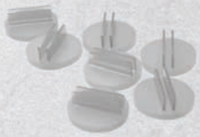
1 Color Filter


7 Standee bases

Cards

Standard cards:

60 Basic Combat and Diplomacy cards

80 Advanced Combat and Diplomacy cards

46 Green Encounter cards

38 Purple Encounter cards

38 Blue Encounter cards

1 Open & Play deck

18 Random Event cards

77 Story Event cards

9 Status cards

219 Secret cards
(This deck contains many hidden elements – do not look at it or shuffle it!)

Small cards:

82 Item cards

38 Secret cards

Oversized cards:

74 Location cards

7 Help cards

18 King of Ruin cards

Other

1 Diplomacy tracker

1 Combat Pool tracker

Tokens

4 Character Trays with removable Tiles

5 Companion Standees

21 Guardian Standees

48 Skill tokens

1 Secret Envelope

Introduction

Tainted Grail: Kings of Ruin is a story-rich cooperative game for 1-4 players set in a grim universe that blends Arthurian legends and Celtic mythology with the unique, dark vision of Awaken Realms' artists and writers.

Each player controls one of four unlikely heroes. Chased by the encroaching, twisted power of the wyrdness, fighting an uneven battle against depleting resources and challenging Encounters, these Characters set out to achieve the impossible – and may easily die before their journey is concluded.

Simple Gameplay Overview

During a standard game of Tainted Grail, you will spend most of your time journeying across the dangerous island of Avalon. Your Character will Travel from one Location card to another, spending Energy and revealing more Locations. Some of these Locations will be covered in wyrdness that needs to be dispelled by activating waystones or using other means that often involve spending resources.

At many points, you will Explore the Locations you visit. This will throw you into the middle of a non-linear, branching storyline, contained in the Exploration Journal that often changes the game world around you, swapping some of the Location cards for their different versions or granting you game-altering statuses or Secret cards. Many interactions open up only after certain events, and seeing everything during a single playthrough is impossible! Do not worry if you must skip past some unavailable options. You will often have the opportunity to return to them later.

At some point, your day will end, giving your Character a chance to rest and recover. At the start of next day, a new Event card will be revealed, pushing the time forward. The more Characters there are in the game, the less time you have before the negative consequences begin to mount!

While playing, you will also stumble upon many random Encounters. To resolve them, you will use your Combat and Diplomacy decks, as well as your tactical Skills. Over time, your Character will advance, letting you expand and optimize your two decks, gain interesting Skills, raise your Attributes, and – eventually – reach parts of the island that you would not have reached otherwise, until you finally complete your current story Chapter or arrive at the end of the Campaign.

That is unless you first succumb to death or insanity. Their shadow will hang above you right from the start. After all, Avalon is not the most welcoming place...

When you return, you will hopefully be wiser and better prepared!

Golden Rules of Tainted Grail

1. Whenever a card's text directly contradicts rules found in this rulebook, the card takes precedence.
2. If several effects trigger exactly at the same time, or have more than 1 available target, players are free to choose the target/the order themselves.
3. If you're unsure how to resolve a particular effect, do so in a way that is the most beneficial for the players – or makes the most thematic sense.

How to Use This Rulebook

In this rulebook you will find all rules needed to play Tainted Grail: Kings of Ruin. The rulebook is divided into ten sections:

1. Campaign Setup, which will help you start your adventure.

2. Playing the Game, which explains the day structure and players' Actions.

3. Exploration Journal, which explains and teaches how to use the Exploration Journal.

4. Core Rules (written in alphabetic order), which provides additional information about all core aspects of the game.

5. Combat, which explains and teaches how to resolve Combat Encounters.

6. Diplomacy, which explains and teaches how to resolve Diplomacy Encounters.

7 & 8. Combat and Diplomacy Examples, which will show you step by step how a typical Encounter is resolved.

9. Alternative Modes, which explains how to increase or decrease the difficulty of the game.

10. Secret Rules, which shouldn't be read until instructed. Here you will find information about new mechanics that unfold as the game progresses, such as the Kings of Ruin.

Three hundred years ago, a giant fleet left the Homelands, seeking refuge from the plague that ravaged the old world. At its helm stood Arthur, the One True King. He led the remnants of humanity to the one place he knew was safe: an island beyond the mists, revealed to him in his dreams — Avalon.

But dreams are fickle things. Arthur did not know the island already had its masters. He did not know about the wyrdness that shrouded Avalon, the primal power of change capable of warping human minds and bodies.

As his fleet approached the island, heavy storms broke it apart. Most ships landed on the eastern coast, together with Arthur, his court, Merlin, and most of the Round Table. A new Kamelot was founded there, wars were lost and won, and many heroes arose.

This is not your part of the story.

Your ancestors were the unlucky few who were ship-wrecked in the west, on a remote part of Avalon, cut off from their king by clouds of wyrdness, high mountain ranges, and the enemy capital, Tuathan.

Yet, your people survived, clinging to strips of desolate land and forging their small, tribal kingdoms. In the years that followed, three great heroes were born from their struggles. One by one, they traveled east, hoping to find the One True King.

Their journey transformed them, imbuing them with powers not intended for mortals. One by one, they failed to find Arthur. One by one, they returned to your lands, drowning them in chaos, and earned themselves a new name: The Kings of Ruin. The sparse network of waystones — ancient mileposts that repulsed wyrdness and allowed safe travel — suffered in their wake. Many stones were shattered. Others drowned in mist too deep for anyone to find and activate them again.

Now, as a slim hope of uniting what was broken appears, you set your foot on a long-lost trail.

Where will it lead you?

Characters

There are four Characters included in the game. Below, you can find their general overview.

Elgan – A master of the strange art of infusing tallow candles with magic, Elgan is a stray wanderer who wishes to return home to his family.

He can light the way through wyrdness by producing Wyrdcandles, but navigating the mists without them can take a toll on his mind.

During both Combat and Diplomacy, his primary role is to utilize his assortment of magic candles – their effects, though not immediate, can be very powerful. However, he can also lean both on his traveling knowledge and empathy.

Elgan is a self-sufficient and well-rounded Character whose Combat and Diplomacy decks do not require learning two different playstyles. He can also be developed to provide strong support to other Characters. However, correctly utilizing timers on his cards may be necessary to bring out his full potential.

Gerdwyn – A heavily-armored arbalist from a famous mercenary group, Gerdwyn travels with her heavy equipment that may sometimes be burdensome. However, she also brings the ability to hunt dangerous monsters from afar.

Her Combat is simple to play and features devastating but infrequent attacks that may require some setup. She also offers one of the best damage-prevention cards among all Characters in the game.

In Diplomacy, Gerdwyn is somewhat impulsive. Her deck allows her to gain value from discarding and removing Diplomacy cards. This allows Gerdwyn to get by in negotiations, but her teammates may not always be happy with some of her plays.

Gerdwyn is a good choice for anyone looking for a simple but effective combat-oriented Character or a tank who could take the hardest hits. She's also a good pick for players wanting to approach Diplomacy from a different perspective.

Recommended Pairs

In two-player games, we recommend pairing Elgan with Iunis or Gerdwyn with Osbert, as their personal story objectives are concluded in the same region.

Iunis – Once a queen of the arena, now a runaway slave. With her natural Fomorian toughness and regenerative abilities, Iunis can survive even the most dire of situations, though traveling human lands is sometimes dangerous for a member of her race.

Her love of the theater and her stage talent, honed in a gladiatorial school, make Iunis a decent diplomat; she excels in turning losing arguments to her advantage. The worse the situation, the better her cards.

In Combat, years in the arena made her a great but reckless warrior. Her cards frequently allow her to pay with Health for powerful effects.

While playing Iunis, balancing your Health level and using it to your advantage is essential. She is a perfect pick for players who enjoy playing longer sequences of cards and do not worry about sacrificing some of their resources. She is more focused on Combat but can also opt into a more Diplomatic playstyle.

Osbert – A trickster and a gambler who travels the world with his companion – a weasel named Clyfar.

Osbert's craftiness allows him to create simple Items that help in many situations, but at the same time, as the most frail of all Characters, he must be particularly wary of monsters roaming the world.

Thanks to a lifetime spent as a traveling performer, he's a master of diplomacy and cunning tricks who features a variety of options for every Diplomatic situation. He even has ways to make the encounters more profitable. His Combat is the opposite, focused more on evasion, and playing around the enemy attacks, though it does feature few precise, powerful effects that require some work to pull off.

Osbert is a good choice if you want to pursue Diplomatic solutions or you like powerful effects that require careful planning.

Campaign Setup

If you come back to a Campaign in progress, you don't need to follow the full game setup below. Instead, go to the "Saving the Game" section on page 20.

Character's Ability and Weakness

Each Character has their own strengths and flaws displayed on their Character tile. A Character's Ability is usually an additional Action that you can perform during a Day. Character's Weakness is usually tied to Locations and your ability to Travel through the world.

Red Chevrons

These chevrons indicate the starting positions of Character tracks and Attributes.

Character Setup

Each player completes the following steps separately.

1. Choose your Character. Read the Character's starting letter. Then, take this Character's cardboard Tray and model.

2. Mark the starting levels of your Energy and Terror. Find the and tracks on your Character Tray. Place universal markers in the starting slots of these tracks, highlighted by two red chevrons.

3. Place the Health marker in the starting track slot. It is also highlighted with two red chevrons.

Note: The L-shape of the marker will help you remember the effect your has on the track (see: "Playing the Game" section on page 8).

4. Mark your starting Attributes and Resources. Place universal markers in slots marked with red chevrons under the Attribute names ( ) on your Character Tray.

Characters also start with some resources. Place that many universal markers in the appropriate slots on your Character Tray.

Elgan – 2 Food and 1 Magic

Gerdwyn – 2 Food and 1 Wealth

Iunis – 3 Food

Osbert – 1 Food, 1 Wealth, and 1 Magic

5. Create your 10-card Combat and Diplomacy starter decks. Find the 10 Basic Combat and 10 Basic Diplomacy cards with the name of your Character and the letter "B" in the card number on the bottom.

Shuffle these decks separately and place them to the left (Combat) and right (Diplomacy) of your Character Tray.

The rest of the cards with your Character's name (with the letter "A" in the card number) are your Advancement Pools. Place these cards behind the Advancement Pool dividers and store them in the Character compartments in the box.

World Setup

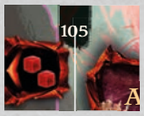
After all players have set up their Characters, follow the steps below.

6. Set the starting Location. The starting Location for the Kings of Ruin campaign is Location card **101**. Place the starting Location in the middle of your play area, clear-side up ( ), and place models of all Characters chosen in the Character Setup on this card.

7. Build the starting section of the map. Check the Direction Key on the top edge of your Starting Location. Find the Location card with the corresponding Location number (**102**) and attach it to the Direction Key, wyrdness-side up ( ). Leave the rest of the Location deck on the table. Remember to leave plenty of space as your map can quickly expand.

8. Prepare the Secret and Item decks. Take all Item "A" cards, "Consumable" Item cards, and small Secret cards. Place them in separate decks on the table. Shuffle both Item decks and leave the Secret deck unshuffled. Place all medium Secret cards in the World Save box, placing the Secret deck dividers in the correct places.

Medium Secrets



Each medium sized Secret card has its number depicted in the top-left corner of its front side. You should **never** search this deck unless clearly instructed to take a certain card. Whenever you search this deck it's recommended to only look at the banner with the Secret number (use the front card of the Secret deck to cover any additional information found on these cards).

9. Take one fresh Status sheet. You will use it to mark Statuses gathered by your Party that permanently change the way some Locations and people respond to your group. On its back side there's also an additional space you can use for notes.

10. Distribute Help cards and prepare Status cards. Each player should receive one Order of the Day card with the Action list on the back. Leave remaining Help cards (Icon Glossary & Traits, Combat & Diplomatic Encounters, and Story & Challenge mode) as well as "You Are Dying" and "You Are Going Insane" Status cards on the table.

11. Prepare the Encounter cards. Take all Encounters and sort them by the color on their backs into three piles. You will use these piles to build your Encounter decks in step 13.

12. Prepare markers and dice. Place Time, Quest, and universal markers, as well as all dice on the table.

13. Set up the first Chapter. Take the Exploration Journal and place it within hand's reach. Take all Random Event cards, shuffle them, and place them on the side of your play area, (they will be added to Event deck later during play). Then, find the Chapter I Setup card and follow its instructions, starting from the front side, to build the Event deck and Encounter decks. Any unused Encounters and Events should be placed back in the box behind corresponding dividers.

Note: After you complete each Chapter of the game, you will be asked to follow a new Setup card to prepare you for another Chapter and modify your Encounter decks, phasing out easier cards and introducing harder ones.

The final part of the Chapter I Setup card includes instructions that start the game. Follow them to begin your journey – **but first be sure to read the "Playing the Game", "Exploration Journal", and "Core Rules" sections of this rulebook!**

Setup Overview

PLAYING THE GAME

Order of the Day

The Day is the most important time unit in Tainted Grail, and represents a full round of the game. At the **Start of the Day** (stage I) a new day begins – it includes some upkeep tasks and reveals a new Event card. **During the Day** (stage II), Characters pay to perform Actions until they agree to proceed to the **End of the Day** (stage III), where Characters Rest, read Visions, and Advance their decks.

In short, as you play Tainted Grail, you will continuously go through the three stages described below:

I. Start of the Day

Resolve these steps, in the following order:

1. Resolve Start of the Day effects.

If there are any effects (on Items, Skills, etc.) that should take effect at the Start of the Day, resolve all of them at this point in any order chosen by the players.

2. Remove Time markers.

Remove 1 and 1 from each card that has at least 1 of them.

3. Flip Location cards to the wyrdness side.

Check each Location in play and flip all Locations that don't have a waystone in one of their corners to their wyrdness side ( ).

Note: Flipping a Location doesn't cause effects to trigger.

4. Activate Guardians.

Guardians are special, roaming Encounters. If there are any Guardians on the table, roll the Guardian die for each of them (in any order) and resolve the roll according to the rules found in the "Guardians" section of the Core Rules (Page 17).

5. Clear Active Events area.

Discard all non-Quest Events from the Active Events area. Random Event cards discarded this way are placed at the bottom of the Random Events pile. Special and Story Event cards are placed back in the box.

Note: Unlike regular Events that stay active for one Day, Events containing Quests remain on the table until the moment specified on their cards.

6. Reveal a New Event.

Reveal and read the top card of the Event deck. Then, move the revealed card to the Active Events area.

Time Markers

There are 2 types of Time markers used in the game. Most of the time is used to track timed Actions, while is used to track story-related situations.

Events

To avoid clutter, it is recommended that you keep the pile of Random Events close to the play area, and unused Story and Special Event cards in the box.

II. During the Day

Throughout this stage, players perform Actions, one at a time, in any order they agree on. Players may perform multiple Actions in a row, and they may change the order any time they wish. This continues until everyone agrees to proceed to stage III, End of the Day.

For Example: In a 3-player game, players can start with the order A, B, C but they can play the rest of the daily actions in another order such as: B, A, C, A or C, A, A, C, B.

Each available Action is marked with an Action icon that also indicates the cost of this Action. There are three main Action cost types:

To perform this Action you must pay the indicated Energy cost. To do it, move the marker that many slots **down** on the track.

To perform this Action you must pay the indicated Health cost. To do it, move the marker that many slots **down** on the track. If it would cause the marker to be above the marker, move the marker to be in the same line as the marker.

To perform this Action you must pay the indicated Terror cost. To do it, move the marker that many slots **up** on the track.

In all above cases, if you can't pay the Action cost fully (it would move the marker outside of available track spaces), you can't perform that Action.

A group of two or more Characters sharing the same Location may agree to take the same Action together, as a Party – see the Party rules written in blue.

The six most important Actions of the game can be found on the Action side of the Help card. They are:

Explore (only available in Locations without a Guardian)

Every Location card in Tainted Grail contains plenty of lore, secrets, or tasks, and Exploration is your primary way of discovering them. The base cost of the **EXPLORE** Action is 0, but during Exploration some decisions and options have individual costs. To Explore:

1. Open the Journal to the page with the explored Location and start reading from the top (see: "Exploration Journal" section on page 11).

2. When you read "Exploration ends", close the Journal and continue performing Actions during the Day (for example, you may Explore again).

In a Party: If you Explore as a Party, the cost of decisions and options doesn't scale with the number of Party members (unless the cost specifically states "per Party member" or "per Character").

Travel

After you pay , resolve these steps in the following order:

1. Move your Character model to any Location card connected to your current one (see: "Locations" on page 19). If two Locations are placed next to each other, but there are no Direction Keys connecting them, it means you can't Travel from one to the other – usually due to mountain ranges, walls, wide rivers, and other natural features.

2. As you arrive, check whether your new Location has an Instant icon ( ) anywhere on its face. Anything marked with this icon must be resolved as soon as you enter the Location.

Note: Some Locations have icon near their effect. This will limit how often this effect triggers (see: "Locations" on page 19).

3. After resolving effects (if any), check whether your Travel revealed any new Location cards. Find cards that match the Direction Keys on the edges of your new Location. Attach them to the corresponding Keys, with the correct side facing up:

- If the Location card you are attaching doesn't have a waystone in any of its corners, place the attached Location card side up.
- If the Location card you are attaching has at least one waystone in any of its corners, place that card side up.

Note: After resolving an effect, if you are no longer in Location you Traveled or moved to, do not attach any new Locations.

In a Party: The cost of Traveling scales to 1 per Party member. If you Travel as a Party, any rules triggered by your new Location must be resolved as a Party as well!

Right before triggering the rule, other Characters in the Location you Traveled to may join your Party to resolve the rule as one Party.

For Example: Player A decides to Travel to a Location where player B is already present. The text on the Location says " Draw and resolve a purple Encounter." Player B may join player A in a Party just before a purple Encounter is drawn, and take part in resolving it.

2 Activate a Waystone

If the Location you are in has an empty waystone slot in any corner, it contains an inactive waystone (see: "Waystones" on page 21) that may be Activated with this Action.

- Choose one of the following options:
  - Pay 1 **Magic** per Character in the game and 1 **Wealth** or **Food** per Character in the game.
  - Offer the "Blood Price." Pay 3 and gain 2 per Character in the game (for example with 4 Characters in the game, you would pay 12 and gain 8 and you must be able to gain this fully).
- Place a waystone model in a chosen empty waystone slot on your Location. Then, flip all wyrdness Locations that touch this waystone to their side.
  - If all waystone models are already on the table, take a waystone from any Location and place it in your Location.

In a Party: Activation costs can always be split between all Characters in the Party in any way, even paying and gaining through the "Blood Price.".

0 Challenge a Guardian (only available in a Location with a Guardian).

Some Encounters will roam the playable area in the game. Any time you are in a Location with a Guardian Encounter, you may challenge it:

- Start an Encounter with one chosen Guardian in your Location (see: "Combat" section on page 22 or "Diplomacy" section on page 27).

In a Party: You resolve this Encounter together.

? Location Action – see the cost on the Location card (only available in a Location without a Guardian).

Many Location cards contain one Action, clearly visible on their front. Performing this Action is possible whenever a Character is present in such Location.

Location Actions are important, as they often let you gather or exchange critical resources. Try to keep an eye on them and plan your Travels in advance!

Note: Some Locations have a icon near their Location Action. This will limit how often such an Action may be performed (see: "Locations" on page 19).

In a Party: You may activate a Location Action as a Party. In this case, you pay the cost only once and receive the output of the Action once. However, players in the Party may help each other pay costs, splitting them any way they want, and if they trigger an Encounter, they resolve it as a Party too.

*For Example: Two players use a Location Action that reads " 2 Hunt: Gain 1 **Food**. Draw and resolve a green Encounter." They split the cost between themselves and pay 1 each. Then, one of them gains 1 **Food**, they reveal an Encounter, and fight it as a Party.*

? Character Ability, Secrets, Items, and Skills Actions – see the cost on the Character / Skill token or a Secret / Item card.

Every Character has a personal Ability on their Character tile. Some Items, Secrets, and Skills also provide your Character with additional Actions.

In a Party: Only your Character can use an Action from your Character tile, Secret card, Item card, and Skill token, but Party members may help pay the cost. However, the Character performing this Action must ALWAYS pay at least 1 , , or (as long as they are part of the Action cost).

Parties and Party Actions

In Tainted Grail, players are free to group as they see fit! You may travel, fight, and negotiate as a single Party, then go your separate ways, only for some of you to join back together to tackle a dangerous situation.

Whenever a Character takes an Action, other Characters in the same Location may decide to join them. If the Character performing the Action agrees, all Characters form a Party and take this Action together – the detailed rules depend on the type of Action.

All Characters in a Party are always referred to as Party members.

In a Party: If you're in a Party with another Character, you may pay , , , **Food**, **Wealth**, or **Magic** instead of another Party member! You may even cover the entire cost of the Action for all the other Party members. There's only one exception: when performing an Action found on your Character tile, Skill, Secret card, or Item card, the owner of that Action must always pay some part of the cost.

Leaving a Party

Each Party Action must be taken and approved by all Party members. Any Character that does not want to take a specific Action with the rest of the Party must leave the Party before the Action begins.

Important: You may not leave a Party in the middle of an Action.

For Example: You can't leave a Party when you make choices during Exploration.

If a Character gets removed from an Encounter that happens during Exploration (for example, due to the "You Are Dying!" card effect or Escaping), they are temporarily removed from the Party (for the purposes of : effects that affect each Party member), but after the Encounter is finished they immediately rejoin the Party and must continue the Exploration.

Characters in Game and Party Members

Some effects like the "Activate a Waystone" Action will count the number of Characters in game. This means an actual number of Characters in play, not only in the Party!

Other effects like "Travel" will count the number of Party members. This means the number of Characters that are currently performing that Action as a Party.

III. End of the Day

When all players agree, the End of the Day begins. When this happens, resolve these steps, in the following order for every Character:

1. Resolve End of the Day effects. If there are any effects (on Items, Skills, etc.) that should take effect at the End of the Day, resolve all of them at this point in any order chosen by the players.

2. Rest.

- If you are not Exhausted – place your marker on the starting slot of its track.
- If you are Exhausted – gain 4.

3. Recover. You may pay 1 **Food** once to gain 1, gain an additional 1 and lose 1.

4. Suffer from wyrdness. If you are in a wyrdness Location (), lose 2 and gain 2.

5. Advance Your Character. If you have any **Exp**, you may pay them to raise your Attributes, gain new Skills, or add new Combat & Diplomacy cards to your deck (see: "Attributes & Character Advancement" on page 13).

6. Modify Your Character's decks. You may customize your Combat and Diplomacy decks with any cards your Character has already gained. You can also remove any cards from your decks (you will be able to return them to your decks during future End of the Day steps). The cards that you remove from your deck DO NOT return to the Advancement Pool. Place them next to your Character Tray or in the Save compartment of your Character.

Important: Each deck must have at least 10 cards!

7. Experience Visions. If the Location you're in has a , you may open the last page of this Location section of the Exploration Journal and read the Vision. All Characters in the same Location resolve Vision as a Party.

Reading Visions is not mandatory, so repeating the same Vision is not required, though it is recommended to read each Vision at least once.

Hint: Visions often provide helpful tips or reveal more of the lore and story.

8. Start the Next Day.

Energy Limit

Remember that your marker sets a limit of your maximum – your marker can never move past your limiter!

Simultaneous Actions

To reduce downtime, a player involved in an Encounter might resolve it while the other players perform their own Actions. Additionally, the players should plan how to spend their **Exp** or how to modify their Combat and Diplomacy decks in advance, in order to reduce downtime during the End of the Day stage.

Chronicler (optional)

In games with 2-4 players, we suggest one player volunteer as the Chronicler. Apart from playing the game, the Chronicler becomes Tainted Grail's equivalent of the Game Master and is responsible for:

- Reading (or retelling) paragraphs of the Exploration Journal aloud to other players.
- Performing upkeep tasks, such as revealing new Event cards, removing Time markers and rolling the Guardian die.
- Maintaining the Save sheet, marking any statuses gained by players, and checking the statuses when asked.
- Adding new Location cards and replacing or modifying Locations when the game requires it.
- Dealing Item and Secret cards from their decks.
- Breaking ties and making the final decision in any conflicting situations.

While the Chronicler has small gameplay impact and having one is not mandatory, choosing a single person to perform this role will reduce the time spent on upkeep and will lead to fewer mistakes. Additionally, listening to what other Characters go through in their exploration helps to keep the rest of the group occupied and immersed!

Exploration Journal

Exploration Journal Structure

Exploration Journal is divided into four sections, indicated by marks on the edge of each page:

1. Locations. Each Location has at least one page in this section of the Journal. Locations are sorted in ascending order, with their numbers on the edge of their pages for quick reference.

2. Book of Secrets (BOS). This section of the Exploration Journal contains many hidden interactions and spoiler-sensitive parts of the story.

3. Echoes of Ruin (EOR). A small section that contains Memories of four main Characters used in the Echoes of Ruin expansion.

4. Tutorial Exploration Journal (TEJ). This section is only used in the Open & Play scenario of the game.

Using the Exploration Journal

Refer to the Exploration Journal whenever you see this icon in the game, perform the Explore Action, or you are instructed to go Character's Memory. Be sure to only open the correct section!

Whenever you Explore a Location, start reading from the top of the first page of that Location.

Whenever you are instructed to go to ( ) "Book of Secrets (BoS) Verse XXX", find the mentioned Verse in the Book of Secrets section. All Verses are sorted in the ascending order.

Whenever you are instructed to go to Character's Memory X, find in in the Echoes of Ruin section.

When reading a Verse, all information in the Verse is available to you (such as costs of choices and even their effects). Information that should not be available to players (such as unpredictable outcomes of players' decisions) will always be hidden behind redirections to other Verses.

Choices and Requirements

Some Verses require you to choose one of several options. All choices in the Exploration Journal are marked with bullet points.

Some choices may be locked behind various requirements, like playing a specific Chapter. Sometimes you also need a specific Attribute, or a certain status. If a choice consists of few requirements all of them must be fulfilled.

In a Party: It's enough for one Party member to fulfill the requirements. So if a choice requires Secret card **13** and at least 2, and one Party member has Secret card **13** and the other one has 2, they may choose this option.

Requirements and choices may come in various types. It is important to note the exact wording of a requirement.

These are examples of common types of requirements found in the Exploration Journal:

- Requires **all Characters** – usually found in choices progressing story, all Characters must be in a Party to fulfill this requirement.
- Requires **Elgan** – one specific Character must be in a Party to fulfill this requirement.
- Requires the "**Faint Notion**" part **1** status – you need a specific part of a specific status.
- Only if you don't have the "**Faint Notion**" part **1** status – you can't have a specific part of a specific status.
- Requires at least 2 – your value of the depicted Attribute must be at least that high.
- Pay 1 **Wealth** – discard that many resources or adjust your Character tracks accordingly.
- Only if you're playing **Chapters 2-4** – you can choose this option only if your current Chapter is specified by the requirement.
- Requires Secret card **15** – one of the Party members must have the mentioned card.
- Only if there are **no** on this Location – a specific amount of markers must be present in a specific Location.
- Requires at least 3 or at least 3 – only one of those requirements must be fulfilled.

Automatic Redirections

Some parts of the Journal automatically send you to other Verses, depending on your statuses, your Attributes, or other variables. It is essential to follow these prompts immediately. They follow the same requirements patterns as choices but are mandatory.

For Example: The first line of Verse you visit reads: "If you have the 'Kingslayer' status, go to Verse 10." You check your Status sheet and see that you have this status. You must go to Verse 10 immediately, and shouldn't read any text beyond this line!

Rolls and Checks

Several Verses found in the Exploration Journal contain a random element – usually, they require you to roll a six-sided die and add your Attribute or other modifiers. When in a Party, always use the highest Attribute level available among the Party members. DO NOT add the attributes from multiple Characters.

For Example: Elgan (1) and Gerdwyn (2) are asked to roll a die and add their . The die shows 1, so the final result is 3 (1 plus the highest value in the Party, which is 2).

Rolling a Die

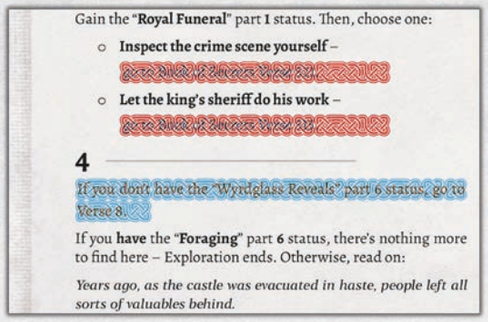
Unless otherwise specified, any effect that asks you to "roll a die" requires you to roll a standard d6 and read its value.

Journal Effects Scaling

Any time Characters are instructed to gain, pay, or lose a resource in the Journal, they will see one of the following 3 types of statements. Please note the differences between them:

- **Gain 2 Wealth** – it means the Party gains 2 Wealth and may distribute it between themselves.
- **Each Party member gains 1 Wealth** – it means each Character in the Party gains 1 Wealth (a Character Exploring alone is also considered a single Party member in that case).
- **Each Character gains 1 Wealth** – it means each Character in the game (regardless of whether they are in the current Party) gains 1 Wealth.

Hidden Content


Gain the "**Royal Funeral**" part 1 status. Then, choose one:

- **Inspect the crime scene yourself** –
- **Let the king's sheriff do his work** –

4

If you don't have the "Wyrdglass Reveals" part 6 status, go to Verse 8.

If you **have** the "**Foraging**" part **6** status, there's nothing more to find here – Exploration ends. Otherwise, read on:

Years ago, as the castle was evacuated in haste, people left all sorts of valuables behind.

During the campaign, sometimes you will stumble upon a colored area (red, blue) with the Journal text obscured under it. Reading these sections is only possible after you find the appropriate plastic color reveal Filter. From the moment you obtain it, any time you come across hidden content in the Verse you are reading, place the matching color Filter on it to decipher it. The only exceptions are paragraphs marked as "Hints." It's your choice whether to read them or try to figure everything out on your own.

If you don't have the matching color Filter, you only read the part of the Verse that isn't hidden!

Rewards and Payments

When Exploring, Characters often gain resources, lose resources, or pay with resources. Each time a reward scales with the number of Characters, it's clearly indicated.

For Example: A Party of 3 Characters solves a quest and receives a reward: "Gain 1 Wealth and 1 Item. Each Character gains 1 Exp." This means the Party first receives 1 Wealth resource and 1 Item card to share among them. Then, each Character in the game receives 1 Exp point.

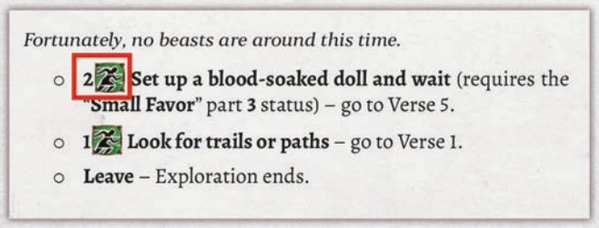
Characters should always try to share the loot in a way that's both fair and maximizes their potential. If they can't agree, the Chronicler makes the final call.

Note: There is an important difference between **pay** and **lose** keywords. If a Character doesn't have enough resources to cover the required payment, they cannot pick an option that requires them to pay. However, if a choice causes a loss, the Character may always select it – the loss simply subtracts a certain number from their current resources, even if they are insufficient (or equal to 0).

For Example: A character with 3 Wealth may pick an option that says: "Lose 4 Wealth", but they cannot pick an option that says "Pay 4 Wealth."

Energy Cost

During Exploration, some options have a set Energy cost. The cost is the first icon in the option, before the option's name and effect.


Fortunately, no beasts are around this time.

- 2 **Set up a blood-soaked doll and wait** (requires the "**Small Favor**" part **3** status) – go to Verse 5.
- 1 **Look for trails or paths** – go to Verse 1.
- **Leave** – Exploration ends.

In this case, if a Character or Party wants to choose an option with 2 cost, they must pay 2.

In a Party: This cost does not scale with the number of Characters in the Party. You may split this cost between Party members in any way you like.

Encounters in the Journal

Sometimes your choices in the Exploration Journal trigger an Encounter. Whenever it happens, find it following the instructions from "Encounters" section (page 16). After resolving such Encounter be sure to check Exploration Journal for further instructions.

In a Party: Encounters in a Party follow the the standard Encounter rules, with the exception of losing such Encounters.

When any Party member Escapes such an Encounter, or drops to 0 and gains a "You Are Dying" card (or fulfills any other present losing conditions), they are temporarily removed from the Party (for the purposes of : effects that affect each Party member), but after the Encounter is finished they immediatelly rejoin the Party and whole Party must continue the Exploration.

Ending Exploration

Whenever you reach the "Exploration ends" sentence, close the Exploration Journal.

During Exploration, players cannot split the Party or end the Exploration on their own in any way.

If you haven't seen everything in this Location, don't worry – you can always start a new Explore Action and go to the initial choices again.

Visions

If a Location card contains a seal next to its name, its last Journal page will contain a respective Vision. During End of the Day, Characters in such Locations may read those Visions. They are always resolved as a Party and can be read once per Day in a given Location, but can occur in several Locations at the same time.

Whenever you reach the "The Vision ends" sentence, close the ExplorationJournal.

Players' Notes

We recommend you take notes. Sometimes you won't be able to progress through certain interactions because of insufficient resources or Attributes. Writing down the Location's number and required conditions can help you remember where to return in the future.

Writing down important names or lore can also help you throughout the game.

CORE RULES
(Alphabetic order)

Attributes & Character Advancement

These six basic Attributes, divided into three opposing pairs, are what define your Character.

Aggression ——— **Empathy**

Courage ——— **Caution**

Practicality ——— **Spirituality**

Your Attributes are used during various Encounters and may open up different story events or solutions when Exploring Locations. After you raise any Attribute to 2, you unlock a possibility of obtaining a powerful Skill.

Experience

Experience points (**Exp**) are the primary means of Character Advancement. During End of the Day you may pay **Exp** in order to raise Attributes, gain new Skills, or gain new Combat and Diplomacy cards.

Raising Attributes

High Attributes are necessary for success in Combat, Diplomacy, and Attribute checks frequently used in Exploration. At the same time, trying to raise all Attributes is increasingly expensive and will prevent your Character from reaching the highest Attribute values.

The current value of your Attributes is represented by red markers in the Attribute's slots on your Character Tray. At the start of the game, each Character has only two slots for every Attribute, leaving them with a maximum Attribute value of 2. To raise Attributes higher you will first have to gain a corresponding Skill, as each Skill token comes with a slot for one additional Attribute point.

The cost of raising Attributes depends on the total value of Attributes in the Attribute pair (see the list of pairs at the start of this section). It equals 2 **Exp** + 1 **Exp** for each point of Attributes in the Attribute pair.

For Example:

Raising your Attribute when you have 0 and 0 costs 2 Exp.

Raising your when you have 0 and 1 costs 3 Exp.

Raising your when you have 2 and 0 costs 4 Exp and requires you to have an additional Attribute slot from the Skill.

Gaining Skills

If you have an Attribute raised to its current maximum, you may gain a Skill of the same type. To do this, pay the appropriate amount of **Exp** (see below), and find all your personal Skill tokens bearing this Attribute's icon. Then, pick one token and attach it to the appropriate edge of your Character Tray.

Skill tokens are double-sided, containing two mutually exclusive Skills. Whenever you gain a Skill, you must choose one side and forfeit the other.

For Example: At the start of the game, Iunis's Attributes are 2, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1 so she can only gain a Skill.

After buying a Skill, she can only buy the second Skill, if she first fills the third slot of the Attribute.

The cost of gaining Skills depends on the total number of Skills in an Attribute pair. It equals 4 **Exp** + 4 **Exp** for each Skill in a pair of opposing Attributes.

For Example: Gaining a Skill when you have 1 Skill and 1 Skill costs 12 Exp.

Advancing Combat or Diplomacy Decks

Advancing your Combat and Diplomacy decks is the main way of acquiring new cards and broadening your capabilites in Combat and Diplomacy.

To Advance your Combat or Diplomacy deck, pay 2 **Exp**. Then, choose either your Combat or Diplomacy Advancement Pool and draw 3 cards from it. Pick 1 of them and shuffle it into your deck. Shuffle the remaining 2 cards back into the Advancement Pool.

You may swap cards you own in and out of your deck at each End of the Day (see: "End of the Day" on page 10).

Advancement Pool

During the setup of the game your Advancement Pools consist of all Advanced Combat and Diplomacy cards (all cards with letter A in their bottom-right corner). Throughout the game, you may buy cards from these pools.

Character Tracks

Three tracks on your Character Tray are especially important, because nearly everything you do in the game affects them.

ENERGY – your basic stamina that renews each day.

Most in-game activities (see "During the Day" on page 8) deplete your . Wounds and afflictions limit your too: when limping along half-dead, you won't be able to do as much as you would when healthy and rested (see: HEALTH below).

The last slot of the track is red. If the marker reaches it, you become **Exhausted**. This will negatively influence your performance and make you regenerate less (see: "End of the Day" on page 10). Despite that, Exhausting yourself is sometimes necessary to avoid something even worse!

HEALTH – your physical condition.

When your runs out, you start **Dying**. The track uses a special L-shaped marker piece to mark your current Health level. The marker should never go above this limiter.

TERROR – mental trauma, stress, and insanity.

If your marker reaches any red slot at the top of the track, you start **Going Insane**.

Death and Insanity

At Death's Door

If your Character's falls to 0 at any point of the game, attach the "You Are Dying" card to your Character Tray and immediately remove yourself from any current Encounter.

Note: If there's only one Character in play, be sure to use the "You Are Dying (Solo)" version of the card. If there are many Characters, use the "You Are Dying (Co-op)" version.

- Do not resolve any additional effects, such as Enemy Attacks, Responses, Conclusions, etc.
- If you were the last Character in this Encounter, discard it (unless it's a Guardian). For the purpose of any rules, it's treated as losing the Encounter.
- Resolve all additional rules found on the "You Are Dying" card.
- If this happened during Exploration, continue it.

From now on, every Action might turn out to be your last! The "You Are Dying" status gives your Character a little time to recover, but at some point you will finally give up your ghost.

Death

When your Character is already at 0 and meets certain conditions listed on the "You Are Dying" card, they die.

If your Character dies and you don't have Secret card **6**, **8**, or **9**, the game simply ends for all players. If you wish to play again, restart the Campaign by following the Campaign Setup rules.

At some point of the game, higher powers will start influencing Character's lives and may still save them. If your Character dies and you have Secret card **6**, **8**, or **9**, read the Death section of the Secret Rules (page 37).

Insanity

If your marker reaches the red slots of the track, attach the "You Are Going Insane" card to your Character Tray and follow its instructions. This will make you Panic during Encounters (pages 26 and 31) and makes Exploration or Travel more difficult.

Discarding & Removing Cards from the Game

Discarding Cards

Most cards in Tainted Grail have no separate discard piles. Whenever you are asked to discard a Random Event, Encounter, or an Item card, put this card at the bottom of its deck. Whenever you are asked to discard a Location or a Secret card, put this card back in the deck according to its number.

All Combat and Diplomacy cards, discarded during the Encounters, are placed in separate discard piles. At the end of an Encounter all Combat and Diplomacy cards are shuffled back into corresponding Combat/Diplomacy decks.

Whenever you discard a Story or Special Event and after you resolve an Encounter that isn't part of your prepared Encounter deck, return that card to the box.

Remove from the Game

Sometimes, instead of discarding a card, you will be asked to remove it from the game. In such a case, put the card back in the game box, behind the Removed from the game divider of the appropriate size. It is no longer a part of this Campaign and should not return to any deck, unless you're specifically asked to bring it back.

Echoes of Ruin

Overview

Echoes of Ruin is an optional expansion for Tainted Grail: Kings of Ruin. It introduces personal Achievements that Characters earn throughout the course of their Campaign, gaining access to small scenes called Memories that expand their stories.

After earning enough Achievements, Characters are rewarded with one-time Legendary Action cards that may be used to turn the tide in most dire situations.

For those who manage to uncover all of their Memories, a special reward awaits: a new Advanced Ability, tied to the Character's personal journey.

Setup

To play with this expansion, simply give each Character their Achievement sheet when prompted by the Exploration Journal.

Legendary Actions and Advanced Ability cards are part of the Secrets deck (Secret cards **310**-**325**).

Note: To avoid overwhelming new players, this expansion is introduced into the game after completing Chapter 1.

Earning Achievements

You earn an Achievement as soon as you meet its requirements listed on the sheet (for example: "Have at least 8 **Magic** – go to Elgan's Memory 4.").

When you earn an Achievement, mark it on your sheet and read the Memory this Achievement points to. After reading your Memory, continue the game.

You may decide to postpone reading the Memory until any moment you see fit (for example, if you want to finish the current Action or Encounter first), to avoid interrupting regular gameplay. You may also return to your unlocked Memories at any time and read (or reread) them – for example, when other players are occupied with an Encounter you take no part in.

Memories can be found in the Echoes of Ruin section of the Exploration Journal located after the Book of Secrets.

Legendary Actions

If you earn all three Achievements in a single section, you gain a Legendary Action card displayed next to this Achievements section. Take this card and mark its box so that you know you've already received it.

This Legendary Action will stay with you for the rest of the campaign, until you decide to use it. Remember to keep it with your other cards and decks when Saving your Campaign.

You may use the Legendary Action at any moment in the game, unless the card states otherwise. Apply the effect of the card, and then remove the card from the game. It's not possible to earn this card or use it during this campaign again.

Final Achievements and Advanced Abilities

Once you earn all nine of your Character's Achievements (and three Legendary Actions connected to them), your final Achievement unlocks. As soon as you meet the prerequisites listed by this Achievement, go to its corresponding Memory. This Memory will grant you the final reward: an Advanced Ability.

The Advanced Ability may be used just like the standard Character Ability printed on your Character tile.

Note: This doesn't replace your default Character Ability – you're still able to use it, if you wish.

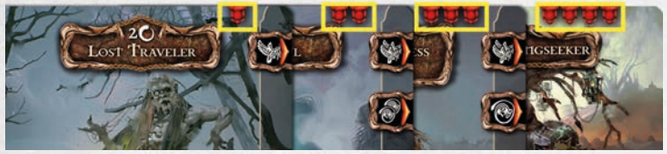
Remove from Play

Sometimes you are instructed to remove something from play. This means to remove it from table back to the box but this component may return to the game.

Encounters

There are three types of Encounters found in the game:

- The **BLUE** deck is used mostly when you visit Settlements and it contains dangerous situations, as well as personal and diplomatic challenges.
- The **GREEN** deck contains natural threats such as animals or legendary beasts, as well as outlaws and other travelers who roam the wild. Many of these Encounters grant **Food** when defeated.
- The **PURPLE** deck contains mysterious and supernatural threats. You will have to discover its significance yourself.



Cards in each of these decks are divided into four difficulty levels, making the game harder as it progresses. The game will explicitly tell you when to add more cards to those decks.

Whenever you are instructed to resolve an Encounter, you and your Party immediately begin Combat or Diplomacy, depending on the type of the Encounter card (see: "Combat" section on page 22 or "Diplomacy" section on page 27). Some Encounter cards have other specific rules described on them and are not solved using Combat and Diplomacy decks.

When an Encounter is finished, if it was drawn from an Encounter deck, place it on the bottom of the deck. If it was taken from the box or the Secret deck, it should be returned to the same place it came from.

Sometimes you will be asked to find and resolve a specific Encounter. For Example:

- Find and resolve Secret card **193** (*Hulking Berserker* combat Encounter).
- Find and resolve a *Warped Wolf* green Encounter (Difficulty 2).

In the case of standard Encounters, look for them in the Encounter decks or in the box depending on their difficulty and your current Chapter. Sometimes it's possible that the Encounter you're looking for is already in play. If that's the case, remove that Guardian from its Location and resolve the Encounter normally.

Secret Encounter cards can be found in the Secret deck. If a Secret is not there, it was added to one of the Encounter decks. If that's the case, find it there.

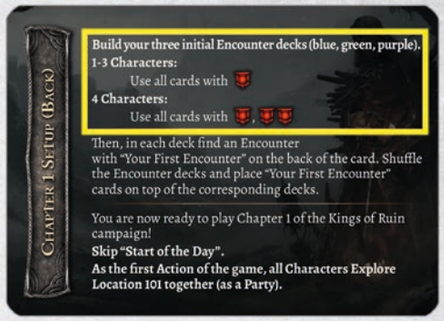
Feeling Lost?

If you're not sure where to go or what to do, always start by checking your Quests again.

Ending Chapters

Finishing a Chapter (or its part) does not have any gameplay effect on its own. It does not End your Day, nor does it heal the Characters. Any rewards or effects will be specifically listed in the instructions that ended your Chapter.
After finishing a Chapter, save or continue your game.

Deck Preparation


Chapter 1 Setup (Back)
Build your three initial Encounter decks (blue, green, purple).
1-3 Characters:
Use all cards with
4 Characters:
Use all cards with
Then, in each deck find an Encounter with "Your First Encounter" on the back of the card. Shuffle the Encounter decks and place "Your First Encounter" cards on top of the corresponding decks.
You are now ready to play Chapter 1 of the Kings of Ruin campaign!
Skip "Start of the Day".
As the first Action of the game, all Characters Explore Location 101 together (as a Party).

During the Setup of each Chapter, you will be asked to prepare Encounter decks. Make sure your decks contain only cards of the depicted difficulty. This usually means that at some point you will have to return part of the Encounters to the box and add others.

Note: If Secret cards were added to the Encounter decks or Encounters in the box, they also take part in deck preparation.

Events, Quests and Leads

Events are the main way of progressing the story of Tainted Grail. At the start of the game, you will be instructed to form an Event deck. At first the Event deck will only consist of Story Event cards and Quest cards, but as the game goes on, Random Event cards may also be added.

During the Start of the Day, discard each non-Quest card in the Active Events Area and draw 1 card from the top of the Event deck.

1. Chapter Setup. These cards will provide information about Encounters, Events, and any additional setup needed for each Chapter. After you fully resolve a Setup card, remove it from the game.

2. Event deck. You will draw a card from this deck during the Start of the Day. It contains Parts of your current Chapter as well as any Special and Random Events added throughout the Chapter. Unused or finished Story and Special Event cards should be kept in the box.

3. Story Events. These cards will always progress your story in some way, or mechanically interact with the Event deck.

4. Quest cards. These cards are the main branches of the story – large, important missions that always lead to the end of the Chapter and let you progress through the Campaign. Quests are always contained on Events and are marked by their special layout and a symbol in the corner of their card.

5. Random Event deck. This deck holds any currently unused Random Event cards. During the game you will often place few cards from here on top of the Event deck.

6. Random Events. These cards will introduce either one-time effects or rules that will affect the game throughout the current Day.

Quests

Here's an example of a Quest card:

1
2
3
4
A Path Less Traveled
1
Place this card in your Active Events area.
Now that the waystone is active, you steel yourself for the journey ahead, knowing that reaching the King's Pass won't be easy. You're about to take your first step on a road to the Pass when a strange feeling creeps up your back. Is something watching you from the mist?
Your initial Exploration now ends! You are free to do whatever you wish to pursue your quest.
Quest
Reach the King's Pass, where roads leading to many forlorn lands cross.
Remember – you may Explore Location 101 again to find more exciting places and stories; the Exploration Action is free!

1. Title.

2. Chapter and part. They allow you to set up the Event deck correctly.

3. Story description. Story introduction to the Event that tells you what is happening.

4. Quest. Explains what you must accomplish in order to progress the story further.

Important: Never discard or remove any cards containing a Quest, unless you're clearly instructed to do so!

Leads

Apart from the main Quests, your Party will find a multitude of Leads. These are small side missions or clues that you may choose to pursue. Following Leads is often profitable and may expand your knowledge of the world, but it is technically possible to finish the game without pursuing them. Leads have no separate cards and no defined end conditions. They are essentially road signs that point you toward interesting places and stories. Unlike Quests, they are not tied to the Chapter and may be completed at any point – at least until your actions permanently change the Location card they are contained in.

Quest Markers

Many Quests and Optional Tasks use Quest markers to track their progress. It is important to note that Quest markers are not removed at the Start of the Day (see: "Order of the Day" on page 8). Quest markers may also be used by some Encounters.

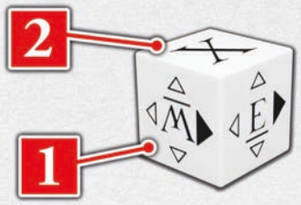
Guardians

These Encounters roam the playable area. They will mainly prevent Characters from interacting with Locations. Sometimes, they may even initiate Combat or Diplomacy with the Characters or cause waystones to Fade. Some are placed in Locations by Events and story entries. Others appear when you draw their Encounter card and are unable to achieve Victory.

When you fail to defeat a Guardian Encounter, place its standee on the Location where you triggered it. Place its Encounter card near the play area so you can easily use it when you resolve that Encounter again.

Guardian Die

During the Start of the Day, you roll a Guardian die for each Guardian on the table. Depending on the result, perform the following:



1. **Cardinal direction** – move the Guardian to a connected Location in the direction indicated by the die. If there's no connected Location in this direction, move the Guardian to the highest-numbered connected Location instead.

2. **"X"** – Resolve the first that applies:

- If the Guardian is in a Location with a Character – Each Character in this Location resolves an Encounter with the Guardian (as a Party).
- If the Guardian is in a Location with a waystone, Fade it (if there is more than 1 waystone, Fade the one that touches the lowest-numbered Location first).
- Move the Guardian to the highest-numbered connected Location.

Characters may not perform Explore and Location Actions in Locations with a Guardian. Forced Exploration caused by ϟ effect or Explorations triggered by the game still take effect.

If you want to remove a Guardian from your Location, you must win the Encounter with such Guardian. To start an Encounter with a Guardian, perform a "Challenge a Guardian" Action.

Items

Item cards available in Tainted Grail are split between 6 decks. There are 5 decks marked with letters A-E on their backs that represent progressively better Items (with A being the worst, and E being the best). Advancing through your Campaign will help you gain access to better and stronger Items.

Note: Items C and D are of the same strength, they differ in the region they originate from and their abilities.

The 6th deck, marked with the CONSUMABLE title on its back consists of simple, one time use cards that remain helpful throughout the game.

Since not all decks will be used at the same time, the game will instruct you which decks should be placed on the table at any given moment.

Some of the Item cards may have one of the following keywords:

- Weapon
- Armor
- Shield
- Relic

You may have any number of Items, but you may never use more than one Item or Secret with the same keyword at the same time with the exception of the **Personal** and **Global** keywords (see: "Secret cards" on page 20). All Items that are in Characters' possessions but are currently unused should be placed face down.

If a Character has multiple Items or Secrets with the same keyword, they may change the ones they are using by flipping the inactive ones face down before any Action during the Day (but not during an Action, Encounter, or in the middle of resolving an effect). Whenever you gain new Items or Secrets with the same keyword as another of your face up Items or Secrets you must immediately decide which one to use (even if it's during an Action). That way, any Character may only have one Weapon, one Shield, one Armor, and one Relic active at any given moment.

Note: Some Items and Secrets can be used only once per Day. Remeber that flipping, unflipping, or trading such cards doesn't let you use them again during the same Day.

Flipping Items

Some Items ask you to flip their card in Combat or Diplomacy to indicate they have been used. When instructed to flip the card, simply turn it face down. At the end of your Combat or Diplomacy, remember to flip it back!

Secrets with Item Keywords

Please note that Secrets sometimes share keywords with Item cards (for example: "Weapon" or "Relic"). Such Secrets still count against the limit of cards with the same keyword that may be active at any one time, described in the "Items" section.

For Example: If you have a Secret with the "Armor" keyword and an Item with the "Armor" keyword you won't be able to use them at the same time.

In Tainted Grail an effect may ask you to:

- Gain 1 Item X – draw the top Item card from the specified deck.
- Gain 1 Consumable Item – draw the top Item card from Consumables deck.
- Gain 1 Item from the lowest/highest available deck – draw the top Item card from the lowest/highest tier of decks currently placed on the table. This does not include the Consumables deck.
- Discard 1 Item – choose 1 Item you have (may be a flipped one) and place it at the bottom of the corresponding Item deck.

Note: In a rare case when you run out of cards in the indicated deck, do NOT draw cards from the next available deck. Simply ignore the reward.

Sometimes you may gain Items from a deck that isn't placed on the table. In that case simply draw a random card of this type from the box.

Items in Encounters

Items such as Weapons or Armor are frequently used in Combat and Diplomacy Encounters. In Encounters, unless an Item clearly states a timing in which it may be used, the owner may use it at any moment during their Activation.

Opposite to Combat and Diplomacy cards, you may decide whether or not to use their effects.

For Example: A Shield with the following effect "Discard this Item to Prevent 2" isn't automatically used during the first Enemy Attack. It's up to you to choose when you need it the most.

Unless specified otherwise, Item effects only apply to its owner.

For Example: A Shield with the following effect "Flip this Item to Prevent 1" may be used in any Enemy Attack step and allows you to defend yourself against an Attack: both a single target one and a : effect one (which targets all Party members).

On the other hand, "Flip this Item to gain " may only be used during the owner's Activation.

Trading Items

Characters may freely trade Items when they are in the same Location and they're not involved in an Action.

Locations

These oversized cards are segments of the map of Avalon, depicting all places you will visit during your journey.

1. Location name.

2. Location number and clear / wyrdness indicator. The number refers to the corresponding section of the Exploration Journal. Some Locations have a letter next to their number. This means this Location is a different variant of a standard Location – some actions, events or circumstances may replace a specific Location with its modified version. Each Location may be placed on either a clear side, denoted by the ⊕ symbol or on a wyrdness side, denoted by the ✳ symbol (see the differences in the next column).

3. Location Seals. Each Location card may have one or more of these special Seals next to its name:

- Vision – If any Characters End their Day in such a Location, prophetic Visions may come to them in their sleep (see: "Visions" on page 12).
- Settlement – This Seal does nothing on its own, but many in-game effects interact with it.
- Ritual – The importance of this seal will be revealed during the game.

4. Location Action. An Action that may be performed in this Location (only if there is no Guardian there).

5. Instant effect. An effect applied immediately any time Characters enter this Location (this effect is applied even in Locations with Guardians, and even if it causes you to start an Exploration in such a Location).

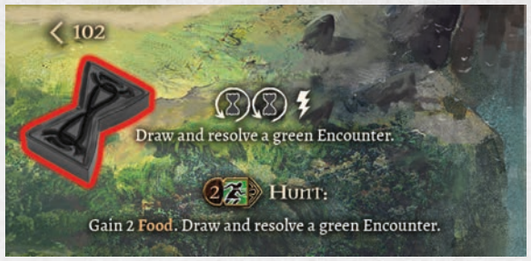
6. Waystone Slot. This is a special space for a waystone model. One slot is split between 4 neighboring Location cards. This means, 1 waystone model is present on up to 4 Location cards at the same time (see: "Activate a Waystone" on page 9).

7. Location Description. Short description of the Location that will often give you hints on what to expect there.

8. Direction Keys. Numbers that indicate which further Locations to connect.

Locations with ⧗ icons

Some Locations have ⧗ icon near their Location Action or ϟ effect. As long as there are no ⧗ on such a Location, you may perform these Location Actions and trigger these ϟ effects normally, but after you do so you must place the number of ⧗ equal to the number of ⧗ on that Location. This indicates that the Action or effect (with ⧗ near them) won't be available again for that many days.



For Example: You enter Location 103, which has 1 ⧗ on it and there are 2 ⧗ icons near its ϟ effect. You don't resolve this ϟ effect, but if you enter this Location during the next Day there won't be any ⧗ left, so you will resolve this ϟ effect and place 2 ⧗ on Location 103. You may still perform the Hunt Action during any of those Days.

Revealing Locations

As you Travel, you will reveal more and more Location cards, provided they are connected with a matching Direction Key. The presence of a waystone determines whether these Locations will be placed ✳ side up, or ⊕ side up (see: "Travel" on page 8).

If the Location card with a number indicated by the Direction Key is no longer available in game, use the first available number with a letter, starting from "b."

For Example: You enter a Location that has a "190" Direction Key on its right edge. You look for Location 190, but it's not available in the game anymore. You check the Location numbers and discover that Location 190b is still in the game. You place Location 190b to the right of the "190" Direction Key.

Flipping and Replacing a Location Card

If you must flip the Location card, don't permanently remove any components from it. After the flip, all models (including waystones), standees, markers (even ⧗ and ⧗), and cards must return to their place on the Location card.

If the game instructs you to replace a Location with another one, discard all markers from the old Location. They are not transferred to the new Location. Only models, standees, and cards should be placed back on the new Location.

Important: If the new Location (or Location side) has a ϟ icon, do not resolve it! This effect is only applied when Characters enters the Location.

Wyrdness ✳ Locations

Locations placed on their ✳ side are treated in the same way as ⊕ Locations with 2 important differences:

- You can't perform the Explore Action in those Locations.
- During End of the Day, each Character in ✳ Locations loses 2 and gains 2 (see: "End of the Day" on page 10).

As soon as ✳ Location has a waystone in its corner, immediately flip this card to ⊕.

Each ⊕ Location card, which doesn't have a waystone in its corner is flipped at the Start of the Day to its ✳ side.

Place your Character in the Location (Special Movement)

Some cards and effects ask you to place your Character in the "lowest-numbered revealed Location", "any connected Location", and so on. This special move does not count as Travel, costs no additional , and is performed instantly, but otherwise follows the same rules as Travel (resolves ϟ effects, reveals new Locations).

Purple Universal Markers

Each purple marker is worth 5 red ones. Feel free to use them to track resources or current in the Combat Pool.

Markers Limitations

Quest, Time, and universal markers aren't limited components. In rare cases where you have to place an additional markers and there are none left feel free to find a suitable replacement.

Resources

There are four spendable resources that Characters can gather and use throughout their travels. Each Character has 4 resource slots on their Character Tray. Mark your current resources with universal markers.

There is a limit of 20 resources of each type that your Character may carry at any point in the game (with the exception of **Exp**, which has no limit). All resources gained above this limit must be given to another Character in the same Location (who still has space for them) or are discarded immediately.

Food – Supplies needed to survive harshness of Avalon. Can be consumed by Characters during the Recover step.

Wealth – Gold, gems, and other riches that may help you buy life-saving Items and equipment.

Magic – Supernatural power that might help you during Encounters, and is required to activate waystones.

Exp (Experience) – Spent on raising your Attributes, acquiring Skills, and new Combat and Diplomacy cards that greatly increase your chances of survival. Unlike other resources, **Exp** will always be gained by all Characters at the same time (with the exception of personal Quests) so feel free to split your group.

Food and **Wealth** may be traded with other Characters in the same Location who are not currently involved in an Action. **Exp** and **Magic** may never be traded, but during Encounters you may pay **Magic** costs of your Party members.

Saving the Game

The game can be saved at nearly any moment During the Day, when Characters are not in an Action. For convenience, it is recommended to do so at the very beginning of the During the Day phase.

While progressing through the campaign, you will also find recommended spots for saving the game (mostly between Chapters or important parts of the story). If you reach one of them while tired or with little game time remaining, stopping there is a good idea.

Tainted Grail is an open-world game, and as such it is impossible to truly judge the time players may spend between 2 recommended save points so remember, you are allowed to save outside of them.

To save the game, follow the instructions below:

I. Each player saves the state of their Character:

a) Pick one Character Tray diagram on the Save sheet. Sign it with your Character's name and write the current Location of your model. Then, mark the current state of your:

- Attribute values, and if you have any Skills, write their unique numbers next to the Attribute they attach to.
- Resources.
- Energy, Health, and Terror.

b) Remove all markers from your Character Tray and store them in the box.
c) In an empty Character Save compartment, place in the following order:

- Your Diplomacy and Combat cards.
- Your Advancement Pool dividers.
- Advancement Pool cards.
- Your Items and Secrets (in the smaller, dedicated space).
- Gained Skills.

d) Write down any additional info you deem important in the Players' Notes section.

II. The Chronicler or a chosen player saves the state of the world:

a) Note the current Location of all waystone models, Guardian standees, Companion standees, and the King of Ruin model (if present).
b) Write down any Locations with markers on them.
c) Place all models, markers, and standees in the box.
d) Store all revealed Locations and all Help cards in the oversized compartment of the World Save box. Do not flip any Location cards!
e) Store all Active Guardians, all three of your current Encounter decks, and all Active standard-sized Secret cards in the standard-sized compartment of the World Save box behind corresponding dividers.
f) Store your Event deck and all Active Quests and Events in the standard-sized compartment of the World Save box behind the corresponding dividers. Do not flip any Event card!
g) Store available Item decks and small Secrets deck in the small-sized compartment of the World Save box.
h) Place all remaining components in the main box in their corresponding slots.

To restore a saved game, reverse this process.

Secret cards

Small-sized Secrets (1-50)

Small Secret cards represent various story related, numbered objects and powers that should never be a part of the Item decks. They may never be lost or sold, unless the rules specifically ask you to. They are also not counted toward any rules that limit the number of Item cards you have (such as the "You Are Dying" card).

If an effect asks you to discard Item cards, omit any Secrets, even if they have an Item-specific keyword.

For Example: An Enemy discards two of your Weapons and you have only one regular Weapon Item and one Secret card (that's also a Weapon). In that case, discard only the regular Item card.

Players are free to trade Secret cards between their Characters whenever they are in the same Location and not involved in an Action.

There are two unique keywords used by Secrets:

- **Personal** – Secrets with this keyword are special and can never be traded or transferred to another Character (unless specifically noted by the rules).
- **Global** – These Secrets are not in any Characters' possession and should be placed in the middle of the area – their effects are applicable to every Character at the same time or to a game as a whole.

Only Secrets with keywords commonly associated with Items (Weapon, Armor, Relic) may be inactive or placed face down during the game – others should always be placed face up, and multiple of them may be active at the same time. If the game asks a Character if they have a Secret in their possession, both active and inactive Secret cards count.

For Example: A Character gains a Personal Secret card. They place it active in their play area, even though they already have another Personal Secret card.

Standard-sized Secrets (105-325)

The number of each Standard-sized Secret card is on the front of the card. If you want to find a Standard-sized Secret card with a certain number, look only at the numbers in their top-left corners. The cover on top of this deck can help you do it without accidental spoilers. Due to this deck's size it's recommended to keep it in the World Save Box.

This deck holds many types of Secrets, including Combat cards, Diplomacy cards, Encounter cards, Event cards, etc. The game will instruct you when to gain them or return them back to the Secrets deck.

The game usually instructs you what to do with a card drawn from this deck and when to return it, but otherwise place it back into the Secret deck as soon as it is no longer actively used.

For Example: Combat cards will be added to a corresponding Character's deck and shouldn't be returned to the Secrets deck unless the game asks you to. When resolving an Encounter drawn from the Secrets deck, return it there as soon as you finish resolving that Encounter.

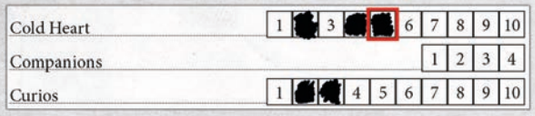
Skills

Skills are a special type of Character Advancement. Each Skill provides an additional Ability as well as an empty slot for an Attribute. Each Character has their own pool of Skill tokens and each Skill is assigned to one Attribute.

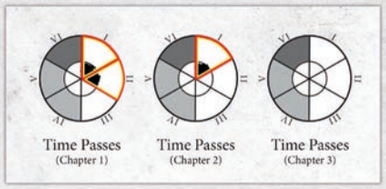
Status Sheet

As you Travel, complete Quests and solve Tasks, you will often be asked to mark or check a certain status (or a numbered part of the status) on the Status sheet.

Statuses are story-triggers that represent your impact upon the world. They are not personal – a single Status sheet is used for all players. If there's a status marked on the sheet, all Characters have it.



Time Passes



The back side of the Status sheet also contains "Time Passes" statuses corresponding to every Chapter of the game.

In Tainted Grail, time will pass naturally as Characters travel around the world. Some opportunities may close, other will open or change forever.

Whenever you are asked to mark a "Time Passes" status, find one that corresponds to the current Chapter you are playing and mark the first unmarked spot in clockwise order.

Gaining a few of them is natural and should not be perceived negatively, but gathering too many throughout the playthrough may come with consequences.

Waystones

In the land of Avalon, whenever a waystone goes dark, parts of the land get covered in the primal force of the wyrdness – except for small, isolated pockets of reality left around disabled waystone and other powerful relics. To represent this, at each Start of the Day, you will be asked to flip all ✣ side Locations that no longer have a waystone to their ✳ side.

Activating Waystones

Activating waystones requires Characters to perform the "Activate a Waystone" Action (see: "Activate a Waystone" on page 9). This flips all Locations that touch the placed waystone ✣ side up.

When activating a waystone, a waystone model is always placed so that it covers the waystone slot of the Location card Characters are in. One waystone model may be present in up to 4 neighboring Location cards at the same time.

Fade Effect

Some Events and other effects in the game can cause waystones to Fade.

If it happens, find the waystone that is mentioned by the Fade effect (e.g., Guardians Fade waystones in their Location) and remove it from play. Fading doesn't cause Locations to automatically flip to their ✳ side.

COMBAT

Basic Combat Overview

Combat in Tainted Grail is a turn-based confrontation between a Character (or a Party of Characters) and an enemy, represented by the Encounter card. Together, Characters build a long line (Sequence) of cards, with the aim of gaining enough markers in the Combat Pool to defeat the enemy. These markers represent the total progress Characters make against their opponent, such as their tactical advantage, wounds they cause, and the opponent's exhaustion.

The detailed rules of Combat are described farther down, but in general, most Combat Encounters play out like this:

Starting Combat – All Party members draw 3 cards and decide whether they want to redraw or not.

Combat Turn

- Phase I – Party members pick a Character who becomes Active.
- Phase II – Delayed Abilities trigger and the Active Character may play Combat cards adding them to the end of the Sequence.
- Phase III – The Enemy makes an Attack against the Active Character or all Party members (in case of effects).
- Phase IV – If there are Party members who were not Active this turn, go back to phase I.
- Phase V – Each Party member discards down to 3 cards, then draws 1 card. A new Turn begins.

Hint: You need to be careful when approaching various Encounters during your travels. Some of them might be particularly difficult for your Character. If that's the case, you may always Escape from an Encounter.

Victory Condition

If at any point during the Combat Encounter the number of markers in the Combat Pool is higher than or equal to the Encounter's Value, you win! The Victory is immediate – do not resolve any remaining effects.

For Example: There are 4 in the Combat Pool and the Encounter Value is 5. You play a card that gains from its Free Key but also has a Ability that would cause you to lose 1. As Key Bonuses are gained before the Ability resolves, you win the Enocunter after you gain the Free Key's Bonus and you don't lose life due to the card's Ability.

Escaping Combat

A Character may Escape at any moment during their Activation – they lose 1 and proceed to the Enemy Attack phase. Then, they place the Encounter card on the bottom of its deck, reshuffle their Combat deck, and set it aside. Escaping Combat is considered losing this Combat for the purpose of any rules and cards that check whether you've won or lost.

In a Party: If an Active Character decides to Escape from Combat, they proceed to the Enemy Attack phase and leave the Combat, as described above. The rest of the Party remains in the Encounter and proceeds to phase IV – Check Readiness. The cards of Characters who Escape stay in the Sequence until the Encounter ends. When all players Escape, put the Encounter card on the bottom of its deck and reshuffle all Combat decks.

Run Away

Characters are not the only ones who may flee from Combat. Some Creatures have a special "Run Away" effect – when it triggers, immediately end the Encounter. Characters receive no Loot. For the purpose of any rules, forcing the enemy to Run Away counts as winning the Encounter.

Encounter Card

This card represents a typical Combat Encounter. It consists of several parts:

1. Encounter Difficulty. Each standard Encounter falls into one of four difficulty categories, shown by the number of .

2. Guardian icon ( ). Some Encounters will roam the land if not defeated (see: "Guardians" page 17).

3. Encounter Value. The resilience of this Encounter – to win, the number of markers in your Combat Pool needs to reach this number.

4. Encounter Name.

5. Flavor text.

6. Enemy Traits. Some Encounters may have special modifiers that remain active throughout this Encounter (see: "Combat Traits" on page 26). *Hexleech* in an example above doesn't have any Trait.

7. Combat table. Determines which Attack the enemy will perform based on the number of markers in the Combat Pool.

8. Opportunity. A special type of attack resolved by an Enemy if an Active Character fails to play even a single card in their Activation.

9. Loot. What you receive after defeating this Enemy.

10, 11, 12. Keys. Connecting halves of these Keys with the halves on the next card grants various Bonuses and builds your Sequence of cards. Read more about Keys on the next page.

Combat Sequence Example

This is an example of a Combat Sequence. Every Character plays their Combat cards, adding them to one, shared Combat Sequence. Cards always form a single straight line so that the bottom Keys always connect. No Keys should be ever obscured. Each card contains opening and closing halves of various Keys. Closing halves can be found on the left side of a Combat card – they will connect to the halves on the card preceding it. Opening halves are to the right – they will connect to the halves on the card that comes after.

A card does not have to contain all the possible Keys, most cards contain only some of them.

Opening halves – always contain a requirement or a modifier to the Bonus on a closing Key.

Closing halves – may contain several types of Bonuses.

When two Combat cards are placed in the Sequence, some halves of Keys will connect, gaining the Character a Bonus shown in the closing half, provided they meet the requirement shown in the opening half.

Keys are considered connected even if you don't meet the requirement to gain a Bonus.

Combat Card

There are two types of Combat cards: standard and passive. The only difference is that passive cards have their Ability always visible when in Sequence. To facilitate this, their Keys are on the opposite edges of the card. Each Combat card consists of several parts:

1. Name.

2. Attribute Keys. The three top Keys of a card correspond to the Attributes of the Character. Opening halves of Attribute Keys contain an Attribute icon. When connected with the closing half, the Bonus in an Attribute Key is gained only if a Character has at least that level of an Attribute.

For Example: You connect *with* *. You will gain a* *Bonus only if your Character has 1 or more* *Attribute.*

3. Magic Key. It's an additional Key that requires you to pay **Magic** for the Bonus to be gained. The opening half will always show a ◇◇ icon. When connected with a closing half, the Bonus on a Key is gained only if a Character pays 1 **Magic**. This cost may only be paid the moment you connect the Key – and it may only be paid once.

In a Party: **Magic** may be paid by any Party member.

4. Free Key. The bottom Key has no requirements. The opening half will usually show a multiplier. When connected with a closing half, the Bonus on a Key is always gained (unless there's no Bonus or it's multiplied by "0x").

5. Ability. The text part of the card contains special rules, which are resolved in various different phases of Combat. Card Abilities are active as long as they are visible.

6. Card Number. To make sorting through cards and building decks easier, each Combat and Diplomacy card has a unique card number and a Character name. The letter next to the number identifies the card's type (B – Basic cards, A – Advanced card, Q – Card gained from a Quest).

Charges

Some cards instruct you to place charges on them. Charges are markers placed on cards that signify a number of times a particular Ability on a card may be used.

Such Abilities start with a "Pay X charges" text and may be used at any moment during a Character's Activation (unless the rules text restricts them to a particular phase). The number of charges is always specified, and the Ability cannot be used if there is an insufficient number of charges.

In a Party: The Active Character may use the "Pay X charges" Abilities from any cards in the Sequence, but the owner of the card must agree.

Candle and Bolt Cards

Some cards have a special subtype represented by a or icon located under the card's name. On its own this icon has no effect but some cards and Skills refer to them.

Active Cards

Unlesss otherwise specified, Abilities of passive cards and the last card in the Sequence always apply and may be used by the Active Character.

Starting Combat

Combat in Tainted Grail starts whenever you draw or pick a card with the Combat Encounter layout (see: "Encounter Card" on page 22) and at least one open Key along its right edge.

After drawing an Encounter card, set it in the play area, ensuring you have plenty of space to the right – you will build your Sequence there. Then:

1. Each Party member draws 3 cards from their Combat deck.
2. If the Enemy has any Traits, check them now, as some Traits may take effect during this moment (see: "Combat Traits" on page 26).

Redraw

If you don't like your starting hand, you may put it next to your Combat deck and draw a new hand with one card fewer. Then, shuffle your previous starting hand into your Combat deck. You may repeat this until you only have one card left in your hand.

When all Party members have their starting cards, go to phase I of the Combat Turn.

Play and Place

You only play cards directly from your hand. Effects may sometimes place cards in the Sequence and will specify whether or not their effects are resolved normally.

Combat Turn

A Combat usually consists of several Combat Turns, with each Turn going through the following phases:

I. Pick the Active Character

The Party members decide who will be the Active Character. They may select any Character who has not been Activated this Combat Turn (Characters who have no ⌛ on their Character Tray yet).

Place a ⌛ on the Tray of the Character that becomes Active. It will remind you this Character cannot be Activated again until the next Turn.

Note: Keep in mind that any gameplay effects (❤ loss, ❤ gain, Ability penalties) that happen during the Turn apply only to the Active Character, unless specified otherwise!

II. Character Activation

1. Delayed Abilities

Remove one ⌛ from each Combat card in the Sequence that has any, starting from the Encounter card and going along the Sequence.

When the last ⌛ is removed from a card, check if it triggered any Delayed Abilities on that card.

2. Playing Cards

In this step, the Active Character will execute their plan by playing cards from their hand and adding them to the Sequence. If the Active Character can't or doesn't want to play any cards, resolve the Opportunity Attack visible on the bottom of the Encounter card and proceed to the Enemy Attack. The Character may also be forced to play a random card if they're affected by Panic (see: "Panic" on page 26). To complete this step, follow the list below:

a) Play the first Combat card. When playing the very first Combat card during your Activation you may choose any card from your hand. You just need to line it properly with the previous card in the Sequence (see: "Combat Sequence Example" on page 23), which will cause the closing half of the Free (bottom) Key to join with its opening half on the preceding card.

Bonus

To play any card after your first card of the Activation, the ⚡ Bonus must appear on the card you want to play (not the previous card) and must be gained. Gaining multiple instances of ⚡ Bonus does not have any additional effect and ⚡ multiplied by 0x isn't gained.

Costs in a Party

During an Encounter **Food**, **Magic**, and **Wealth** costs may be paid by any Party member, but ❤, ❤, and ❤ costs must be paid by an Active Character.

Resolving Played Cards

Immediately after you play a card, resolve it in the following order:

- Check if both halves of Attribute Keys connect. Going from top to bottom, gain the Bonuses found in the closing halves of these Attribute Keys. Remember that to gain the Bonus, you need to have the specific Attribute value found on the opening half of the Attribute Key.

Having a higher Attribute than required does not affect the Bonuses – they do not scale with your Attributes.

- If a **Magic** Key is connected, you may pay 1 **Magic** to gain its Bonus.
- Connect the bottom, Free Key – gain the Bonus found in the closing half of this Key. Multiply the Bonus by the multiplier in the opening half of the Key.

Note: If your multiplier is 0x, you don't gain this Bonus.

- Check the Ability, and if it triggers now, resolve it (see: "Combat Triggers & Icons" on page 25).
- Check if playing this card triggered effects of any other card or Skill.

Note: If you cover a non-passive card that has any ⌛ on it, remove them immediately but do not resolve the Delayed Ability.

b) Play additional Combat cards. In each Activation, to play additional cards (after the first one), every such card requires a ⚡ Bonus to be gained from any of its Keys. If you have no cards that have this Bonus, or you can't find a way to gain it, you may not play any additional cards!

III. Enemy Attack

The Enemy will now Attack the last Active Character. Its Attack will differ depending on the current state of the Combat Pool.

- Find the Attack in the Combat table of the Encounter card that matches the number of ● in the Combat Pool. Apply the Attack to the last Active Character, resolving the effects in order from left to right.

In a Party: Some parts of Enemy Attack have a ⛵ icon directly before them. Apply those to each Party member.

- If the Enemy's Attack would cause the Combat Pool to become negative, discard the top card of your deck for each ● lost below 0 instead.

Effects Impacting Enemy Attack

You can find the following effects on cards:

☠ – this effect will modify the Enemy Attack, either by adding additional effects or preventing ones made by the Enemy.

Before ☠ – this effect is resolved after you finish your Activation but before any ☠ effect takes place.

After ☠ – this effect is resolved after you apply all parts of the Enemy Attack.

IV. Check Readiness

Check if all of the Party members have been Activated during this Turn (have ⌛ on their Character Trays).

- If there are no Characters left to Activate, go to the phase V (End Turn).
- If there are still Characters who haven't been Activated, go back to the phase I (Pick the Active Character).

V. End Turn

- Each Party member discards down to 3 cards in hand.
- Each Party member draws 1 card from their deck. Do not draw if your Character Panics (see: "Panic" on page 26).
- Remove all ⌛ from the Character Trays. This does not affect any ⌛ left on Combat cards!
- Start a new Turn. Go back to phase I (Pick the Active Character).

Ending the Encounter

Victory Check

If at any moment the number of ■ in the Combat Pool is higher than or equal to the Encounter's Value, you win! Receive Loot visible on the bottom of the Encounter card.

In a Party: Only effects with 👥: before them scale with the number of Party members. Other effects are only gained once per Encounter and should be distributed between Party members.

Death, Escape, and Run Away

If you've gained a "You Are Dying" card or Escaped, you lose the Encounter. When you lose or the Enemy Runs Away, the Encounter ends but you don't gain any Loot.

Encounter Cleanup

If you've lost against a Guardian Encounter (🛡), place its standee in your Location. Otherwise, place the Encounter card on the bottom of its deck (if the Encounter card came from the Secret deck or from the box, return it there instead). Then, shuffle all Combat decks, including any cards in hand, Sequence, and discard. Remove all ⌛ from the Character Trays. If this Encounter happened during Exploration, continue it now, applying any additional effects if necessary.

Combat Triggers & Icons

Most Combat cards have an Ability. Abilities usually start with a Trigger icon that clearly indicates when you should resolve them.

On Placement – Resolve this Ability after placing the card in the Sequence and connecting its Keys.

Delayed Ability – Delayed Ability is associated with ⌛ (Time markers) placed on the card. The Active player (it doesn't have to be the card's owner) resolves this ability when the last ⌛ is removed from the card. When you cover a non-passive card with ⌛ on it with another card, discard all ⌛ from it without resolving any Delayed Abilities.

Damage – This icon means your Character must lower their ❤ by the indicated amount.

Unpreventable Damage – This Damage cannot be prevented! Effects that completely cancel the Attack (or transform Damage into other effects) may still apply to Unpreventable Damage.

Connected Attribute Key – This icon refers to Attribute Keys that have the left and right halves physically joined.

Connected Magic Key – This icon refers to Magic Keys that have the left and right halves physically joined.

👥: **Multi effect** – Apply the effect listed right after this icon to each Party member.

Destroy – Discard the last Combat card of the Sequence. Some cards have the "If this card is ...". If such a card is discarded from the Sequence, the corresponding effect are resolved. Multiple effects should be resolved one by one.

On Enemy Attack – Some cards have effects that will be applied during the Enemy Attack. Usually, they will let you defend from the Enemy but sometimes they represent your open position as you make risky moves.

Effect examples – Here are some examples of interactions between Enemy Attacks and effects.

1 and 6. If the Enemy Attack has the same effect as the effect, add the effect value to the Enemy Attack.

In this case, the last card in the Sequence has the +1 effect. During the Enemy Attack, the Active Character receives 3 and loses 1.

2 and 6. If the effect is not present in the Enemy Attack, resolve it as the last effect of the Enemy Attack.

In this case, the last card in the Sequence has the +1 effect. During the Enemy Attack, remove 6 markers from the Combat Pool and then the last Active Character receives 1.

3 and 6. In rare cases the Enemy Attack can stop the effect from resolving.

In this case, the last card in the Sequence has the +1 effect. During the Enemy Attack, the Encounter Runs Away finishing the Combat. The Active Character doesn't receive 1, because the Encounter immediately ended.

Note: In this case if the Enemy Attack contained a effect instead of Run Away the +1 effect also wouldn't resolve as the card would be discarded before its effect should be applied.

4 and 6. If the Enemy Attack has the same effect as the effect, add the effect value to the Enemy Attack even if that effect is 👥:.

In this case, the last card in the Sequence has the +1 effect. During the Enemy Attack, each Party member receives 4, then place 3 markers in the Combat Pool.

5 and 6. If the Enemy Attack has more than one of the same effect as the effect, add the effect value to each instance of that effect.

In this case, the last card in the Sequence has the +1 effect. During the Enemy Attack, the last Active Character receives 2, 1 then each Party member receives 2 and finally the last Active Character gains 3.

5 and 7. If the effect Prevents effects from the Enemy Attack, it is applied to each instance of that effect.

In this case, the last card in the Sequence has the 👥: Prevent 2 effect. During the Enemy Attack, the last Active Character receives 1 and gains 3.

Effects on Items

Even though most effects may only be used when you're an Active Character, if you have any Items with effect you may use them to protect your Character from both single target and 👥 Attacks but you can't apply them to other Characters (unless specified by the item).

Preventing

Many cards and Skills allow you to Prevent parts of the Enemy Attack. If the Prevent effect isn't enough to completly negate the Enemy effect, apply the effect, lowered by the Prevent effect.

The most common type of Prevention is found on Shield and Armor Items or some Combat cards and allows you to Prevent .

/ / **Attributes Requirements** – To gain the Bonus connected to this Key, your value of the depicted Attribute must be at least 1/2/3.

Free Key Multiplier

?x – Multiplies the next Bonus.

For Example: 2x *means you place 2 markers in the Combat Pool.*

Key Bonuses

All Bonuses found on Keys are mandatory. If a Character can gain them, they must be gained! The following effects are commonly found on Key Bonuses, but sometimes also appear in card Abilities.

– Combat Pool markers. These markers are usually seen with gain or lose keywords instructing you to place or remove that many from the Combat Pool. As a Key Bonus it always means to gain that many .

– Draw a card.

– This is a unique Bonus Key, as it's checked before any other Keys. If a card you want to play is not the first card played this turn, it must be able to gain this Bonus. Gaining multiple instances of this Bonus does not have any additional effect and if multiplied by 0x it isn't gained.

Other Combat Rules

Panic

Panic takes place anytime your Character is Going Insane (a marker is in the red slot of Terror track on the Character Tray).

When this happens:

- During step 2 of your Activation, instead of playing the first card from your hand, you place the top card from your deck at the end of the Sequence and resolve it. Then, any additional cards may be played from your hand, according to the standard rules (they require a Bonus).
- Do not draw cards at the End Turn phase. Any additional cards drawn from Bonus Keys, Skills, or Abilities are still drawn as normal.

You Are Dying!

Whenever a Character's drops to 0, the Character receives a "You Are Dying" card. Among other rules, the card immediately removes the Character from the current Encounter – see its text for more details. Other Party members continue the Encounter.

Discarding from an Empty Hand

Whenever you must discard a card from your hand, but you don't have any, discard a card from the top of your Combat deck instead.

Negative Combat Pool

The Combat Pool can never become negative. Whenever an Enemy Attack or another effect asks a Character to remove from the Combat Pool, but there are not enough markers, the last Active Character discards a card from the top of their Combat deck for each missing .

For Example: There are 2 markers in the Combat Pool. The Attack loses 4 markers. 2 markers are removed from the Combat Pool and 2 cards are discarded from the top of the last Active Character's deck.

Empty Deck

Whenever a Character should draw a card from their Combat deck and there are not enough cards, nothing happens – draw as many as possible and simply continue the Encounter.

Combat Traits

Many Encounters posses one or more Traits that will influence the Combat. Here's a list of common Traits:

Dread – Before , if you have 1 or fewer cards in hand, gain 1 .

Entrapment – At the start of the Encounter, each Party member discards 1 card from their hand or loses 1 .

Exhaustive – Before , discard 1 card from the top of your deck.

Harass (X-Y) – Effect – Before , if there are at least X, but no more than Y cards in the Sequence, resolve the corresponding Effect.

Haste – You may play at most 3 cards during your Activation.

Shatter – At the end of Combat, if you won, each Party member still remaining in Combat discards a chosen Weapon they were using.

Combat Pool Tracker

Instead of physically placing in the Combat Pool you can use the Combat tracker provided with Tainted Grail: Kings of Ruin. Whenever you gain or lose simply rotate the wheel to mark the current value of the Combat Pool.

DIPLOMACY

In Tainted Grail, not all Encounters end in Combat. Blue Encounter deck consists almost entirely of diplomatic challenges and social confrontations your Character might need to navigate. They play similarly to Combat, so if you're already familiar with it, learning Diplomacy should be easy.

Basic Diplomacy Overview

Diplomacy in Tainted Grail is a turn-based confrontation between a Character (or a Party of Characters) and an enemy, represented by the Encounter card. Together, Characters build a long line (Sequence) of cards, with the aim of pushing a marker on the Encounter card's Affinity track to the Green space as the Duration ( ) runs out.

Note: Reaching the Green space of the Affinity track before the Duration runs out does not win the Encounter automatically. Conclusion is only resolved as the Duration hits 0.

The detailed rules of Diplomacy are described farther down, but in general, most Diplomatic Encounters play out like this:

Starting Diplomacy – All Party members draw 3 cards and decide whether they want to redraw or not. Set a Duration die to the number shown by the icon on the top of the Encounter. Place a universal marker in the starting slot (S) of the Affinity track.

Diplomacy Turn

- Phase I – Party members pick a Character who becomes Active.
- Phase II – Delayed Abilities trigger and the Active Character may play Diplomacy cards adding them to the end of the Sequence.
- Phase III – The Enemy responds to the Active Character or all Party members (in case of effects).
- Phase IV – If there are Party members who were not Active this turn, go back to phase I.
- Phase V – Each Party member discards down to 3 cards, then draws 1 card. A new Turn begins.

Hint: If you feel that your Character is not prepared to handle tougher Diplomatic challenges, you may always try to Avoid them.

Encounter's Duration

Duration shows how long the Encounter will last. During Diplomatic Encounters, use a Duration die to track the Duration value. Some effects, including the Enemy Response, may lower or increase the Duration. If it happens, turn the die to the correct side. If the last point of Duration is lost, the Encounter immediately ends (ignore any remaining effects) and the Encounter Conclusion is resolved.

Duration can never be increased to a higher number than 10. When the Duration die is on "10" and you gain Duration – nothing happens.

Encounter's Conclusion

The outcome of the Diplomatic Encounter is represented by one or more Conclusions. Immediately after the Duration is reduced to 0, check the Affinity track to determine the color of the slot with a marker. Then, resolve the Conclusion corresponding to that color. After that, Diplomacy is concluded – return the Encounter card to the bottom of its deck (if the Encounter card came from the Secret deck, return it there instead).

There are three possible Conclusions:

 – Favorable end. Requires effort but usually rewards accordingly.

 – Neutral outcome. Usually easily achievable. Either provides small rewards or punishments.

 – Something went wrong. Punishments may be severe.

Avoiding Diplomacy

During Character Activation of the Diplomatic Encounter, the Character or Party can Avoid the Encounter. Each Party member must agree. If they do, lower the marker on the Affinity track by 4 spaces and lose all . Encounter immediately ends (ignore any remaining effects) and the Conclusion is resolved.

Avoiding a Diplomatic Encounter is a decision that applies to the Entire Party – The Party always Avoids as a group. If a unanimous decision about Avoiding the Encounter can't be reached, the Party must resolve it.

Encounter Card

This card represents a typical Diplomatic Encounter. It consists of several parts:

1. Encounter Difficulty. Each Diplomatic Encounter belongs to one of the four difficulty categories, from the easiest to the hardest.

2. Guardian icon ( ). Some Encounters will roam the land if favorable Conclusion is not achieved (see: "Guardians" page 17). *Drunken Knight* in an example above isn't a Guardian.

3. Encounter Duration. Determines the starting Duration of the Encounter.

4. Encounter Name.

5. Affinity track. Many effects push a marker up or down this track. Some Abilities also check whether the marker is currently on green, gray, or red. Slot "S" is the starting slot.

6. Flavor Text.

7. Enemy Traits. Some Encounters have special modifiers that remain active throughout the Encounter (see: "Diplomacy Traits" on page 31). *Drunken Knight* in an example on previous page doesn't have any Trait.

8. Diplomacy table. The left part specifies effects when connecting Keys. The right part determines the Enemy Response.

9. Conclusion. Depending on the final slot of the Affinity track marker, you will resolve a different Conclusion at the end of the Encounter.

10, 11, 12. Keys. Connecting halves of these Keys with the halves on the next card grants various Bonuses and builds your Sequence of cards. Read more about Keys below.

Diplomacy Sequence Example

This is an example of a Diplomacy card Sequence. Every Character plays their Diplomacy cards, adding them to one, shared Diplomacy Sequence. Cards always form a single straight line so that the bottom Keys always connect. No Keys should be ever obscured. Each card contains opening and closing halves of various Keys. Closing halves can be found on the left side of a Diplomacy card – they will connect to the halves on the card preceding it. Opening halves are to the right – they will connect to the halves on the card that come after.

A card does not have to contain all the possible Keys, most cards contain only some of them.

Opening halves – always contain a requirement or a modifier to the Bonus on a closing Key.

Closing halves – may contain several types of Bonuses.

When two Diplomacy cards are placed in the Sequence, some halves of Keys will connect, gaining the Character a Bonus shown in the closing half, provided they meet the requirement shown in the opening half.

Keys are considered connected even if you don't meet the requirement to gain a Bonus.

Diplomacy Card

There are two types of Diplomacy cards: normal and passive. The only difference is that passive cards have their Ability always visible when in Sequence. To facilitate this, their Keys are on the opposite edges of the card. Each Diplomacy card consists of several parts:

1. Name.

2. Attribute Keys. The three top Keys of a card correspond to the Attributes of the Character. Opening halves of Attribute Keys contain an Attribute icon. When connected with the closing half, the Bonus in an Attribute Key is gained only if a Character has at least that level of an Attribute.

For Example: You connect with . You will gain Bonus only if your Character has 2 or more Attribute.

3. Magic Key. It's an additional Key that requires you to spend Magic for the Bonus to be gained. The opening half will always show a icon. When connected with a closing half, the Bonus on a Key is gained only if a Character pays 1 Magic. This cost may only be paid the moment you connect the Key – and it may only be paid once.

In a Party: Magic may be paid by any Party member.

4. Free Key. The bottom Key has no requirements. The opening half will usually show a multiplier. When connected with a closing half, the Bonus on a Key is always gained (unless there's no Bonus or it's multiplied by 0x).

5. Ability. The text part of the card contains special rules, which are resolved in various different phases of Diplomacy. Card Abilities are active as long as they are visible.

6. Card Number. To make sorting through cards and building decks easier, each Combat and Diplomacy card has a card number and a Character name. The letter next to the number identifies the card's level (B – Basic cards, A – Advanced card, Q – card gained from a Quest).

Charges

Such Abilities start with a "Pay X charges" text and may be used at any moment during a Character's Activation (unless the rules text restricts them to a particular phase). The Number of charges is always specified, and the Ability cannot be used if there is an insufficient number of charges.

In a Party: The Active Character may use the "Pay X charges" Abilities from any cards in the Sequence, but the owner of the card must agree.

Candle Cards

Some cards have a special subtype represented by a icon located under the card's name. On its own this icon has no effect but some card's and Skills refer to it.

Active Cards

Unlesss otherwise specified, Abilities of passive cards and the last card in the Sequence always apply and may be used by the Active Character.

Starting Diplomacy

Diplomacy in Tainted Grail starts whenever you draw or pick a card with the Diplomatic Encounter layout and at least one open Key along its right edge.

After drawing an Encounter card, set it in the play area, ensuring you have plenty of space to the right – you will build your Sequence there. Then:

1. Each Party member draws 3 cards from their Diplomacy deck.
2. Set a Duration die to the number shown by the icon ( ) on the top of the Encounter.
3. Place a universal marker in the starting slot (S) of the Affinity track.
4. If the Encounter has any Traits, check them now, as some Traits may take effect during this moment (see: "Diplomacy Traits" on page 31).

Redraw

If you don't like your starting hand, you may put it next to your Diplomacy deck and draw a new hand with one card fewer. Then, shuffle your previous starting hand into your Diplomacy deck. You may repeat this until you only have one card left in your hand. When all Party members have their starting cards, go to phase I of the Diplomacy Turn.

Diplomacy Turn

A Diplomatic Encounter usually consists of several Turns, with each Turn going through the following phases:

I. Pick the Active Character

The Party members decide who will be the next Active Character. They may select any Characters who have not been Activated this Diplomacy Turn (they have no on their Character Tray).

Place a on the Tray of the Character that became Active. It will remind you this Character cannot be Activated again until the next Turn.

Note: Keep in mind that any gameplay effects (loss, gain, Ability penalties) that happen during the Character Activation apply only to the Active Character, unless specified otherwise!

II. Character Activation

1) Delayed Abilities

Remove one from each card in the Sequence that has any, starting from the Encounter card and going along the Sequence.

When the last is removed from a card, check if it triggered any Delayed Abilities on that card.

2) Playing Cards

In this step, the Active Character will execute their plan by playing cards from their hand and adding them to the Sequence. The Character may also be forced to play a random card if they're affected by Panic (see: "Panic" on page 31). To complete this step, follow the list below:

a) Play the first Diplomacy card. When playing the very first Diplomacy card during your Activation, you may choose any card from your hand. You just need to line it up properly with the previous card in the Sequence (see: "Diplomacy Sequence Example" on page 28), which will cause the closing half of the Free (bottom) Key to join with its opening half on the preceding card. If you can't or don't want to play any cards, proceed to the next step.

Resolving Played Cards

Immediately after you play a card, resolve it in the following order:

- Check if both halves of Attribute Keys connect. Going from top to bottom, gain the Bonuses found in the closing halves of these Attribute Keys. Remember that to gain the Bonus, you must have the specific Attribute value found on the opening half of its Attribute Key.

Having a higher Attribute than required does not affect the Bonuses – they do not scale with your Attributes.

The most common Bonus found on Attribute Keys is . This Bonus may have a different effect (or no effect at all) depending on the Encounter (be sure to read Diplomacy Bonuses carefully).

- If a Magic Key is connected, you may pay 1 Magic to gain its Bonus.
- Connect the bottom, Free Key – gain the Bonus found in the closing half of this Key. Multiply the Bonus if there's a multiplier in the opening half of the Key.

Note: If your multiplier is 0x, you don't gain this Bonus.

- Check the Ability, and if it triggers now, resolve it (see: "Diplomacy Triggers & Icons" on page 30).
- Check if playing this card triggered effects of any other card or Skill.

Note: If you cover a non-passive card that has any on it, remove them immediately but do not resolvethe Delayed Ability.

b) Play additional Diplomacy cards. In each Activation, to play additional cards (after the first one), every such card requires a Bonus to be gained from any of its Keys. If you don't have any cards with this Bonus, or you can't find a way to gain it, you may not play any additional cards!

III. Enemy Response

The Enemy will now Respond to the last Active Character. The Enemy Response will generally interact in some way with the Affinity track (for example by lowering it) and with the Duration.

- Apply the result of the Enemy Response to the last Active Character, resolving the effects in order from left to right.
In a Party: Some parts of the Enemy Attack have a icon directly before them. Apply those to each Party member.

- If the Enemy's Response would lower the marker on the Affinity track below the bottom slot, discard the top card of your deck for each that would move the marker below the bottom slot instead.

Effects Impacting Enemy Response

You can find the following effects on cards:

- – this effect will modify the Enemy Response, either by adding additional effects or preventing ones made by the Enemy.
- Before – this effect is resolved after you finish your Activation but before any effect takes place.
- After – this effect is resolved after you apply each part of the Enemy Response.

Play and Place

You only play cards directly from your hand. Effects may sometimes place cards in the Sequence and will specify whether or not their effects are resolved normally.

Bonus

To play any card after your first card of the Activation, the Bonus must appear on the card you want to play (not the previous card) and must be gained. Gaining multiple instances of Bonus does not have any additional effect and multiplied by 0x isn't gained.

Costs in a Party

During an Encounter, Food, Magic, and Wealth costs may be paid by any Party member, but , , and costs must be paid by an Active Character.

IV. Check Readiness

Check if all of the Party members have been Activated during this Turn (have ⧗ on their Character Trays).

- If there are no Characters left to Activate, go to the phase V (End Turn).
- If there are still Characters who haven't been Activated, go back to the phase I (Pick the Active Character).

V. End Turn

- Each Party member discards down to 3 cards in hand.
- Each Party member draws 1 card from their deck. Do not draw if your Character Panics (see: "Panic" on page 31).
- Remove all ⧗ from the Character Trays. This does not affect any ⧗ left on Diplomacy cards!
- Start a new Turn. Go back to phase I (Pick the Active Character).

Preventing

Many cards and Skills allow you to Prevent parts of the Enemy Response. If the Prevent effect isn't enough to completely negate the Enemy effect, apply the effect, lowered by the Prevent effect.

The most common type of Prevention in Diplomacy allows you to Prevent ⬇.

Ending the Encounter

Conclusion Check

If at any moment the last Duration point is lost, the Encounter immediately ends and the Conclusion is resolved (ignore any remaining effects). Reducing the Duration to 0 or gaining the "You Are Dying" card while being the last Character in the Encounter are the only ways to finish Diplomacy.

For Example: The Enemy Response is: "Lose 1◯, ⬇". If losing 1◯ would cause you to lose its last point, you don't move the marker but immediately resolve the Conclusion effect.

Conclusion Effects

Apply the Conclusion effect (see: "Encounter card" on page 27) depending on the Affinity marker's position. There are three possible Conclusions: , , .

In a Party: Only effects with ♟: before them apply to each Party member. Other effects are only gained once per Encounter and should be distributed between Party members.

Encounter Cleanup

Place the Encounter card on the bottom of its deck (if the Encounter card came from the Secret deck or from the box, return it there instead). Then, shuffle all Diplomacy decks, including any cards in hand, Sequence, and discard. Remove all ⧗ from the Character Trays. If this Encounter happened during Exploration, continue it now, applying any additional effects if necessary.

Diplomacy Triggers & Icons

Most Diplomacy cards have an Ability. Abilities usually start with a Trigger icon that clearly indicates when you should resolve them.

◯ **Duration** – Depicts how long the Encounter will take place. Some effects will cause you to gain (increase) or lose (decrease) the Duration.

💀 **On Enemy Response** – Some cards have effects that will be applied during Enemy Response.

If the Enemy Response has the same effect as the 💀 effect, add the 💀 effect value to the Enemy Response.

If the 💀 effect is not present in the Enemy Response, resolve the 💀 effect as the last effect of the Enemy Response (see: "💀 Effects examples" on page 25).

⬇ **On Placement** – Resolve this Ability after placing the card in the Sequence and connecting its Keys.

⧗ **Delayed Ability** – Delayed Ability is connected with ⧗ (Time markers) placed on the card. The Active player (it doesn't have to be the card's owner) resolves this ability when the last ⧗ is removed from the card. When you cover a non-passive card with ⧗ on it with another card, discard all ⧗ from it without resolving any Delayed Abilities.

Damage – This icon means your Character has to lower their ♥ by the indicated amount.

Unpreventable Damage – This Damage cannot be prevented! Effects that completely cancel the Response (or transform Damage into other effects) may still apply to Unpreventable Damage.

Connected Attribute Key – This icon refers to Attribute Keys that have the left and right halves physically joined.

Connected Magic Key – This icon refers to Magic Keys that have the left and right halves physically joined.

♟: **Multi effect** – Apply the effect listed right after this icon to each Party member.

Guardian– Some Encounters will have this icon on one of their Conclusions. If such an outcome is reached, the Encounter is placed on the Location as a Guardian.

Destroy – Discard the last Diplomacy card of the Sequence. Some cards have the "If this card is ...." effect. If such a card is discarded from the Sequence, the corresponding effect should be carried out. Multiple effects are resolved one by one.

/ / **Attributes Requirements** – To gain the Bonus connected to this Key, your value of the depicted Attribute must be at least 1/2/3.

Free Key Multiplier

?x – Multiplies the next Bonus.

For example: 2x means you move the marker 2 slots up on the Affinity track.

Key Bonuses

⬆ / ⬇ – Move the marker 1 slot up or down on the Affinity track.

– This Bonus is determined by the Encounter. Whenever you resolve a Bonus, check if the Encounter card contains a rule corresponding to the Attribute this Bonus is connected to. If it does, resolve that effect once. Here are some examples of different effects.

Note: Higher Attribute level does not multiply effects of .

1. If you gain from a Key, you will draw 1 card.

2. If you are able to gain from a Key, you may play this card even if it's not the first one during your Activation (same as being able to gain a Bonus normally).

3. If you gain from a Key, you will lose 1 potentially ending the Encounter before you resolve other Keys.

4. If you gain from a Key, move the marker on the Affinity track 1 slot up. Additionaly, if you gain from a Key, you gain 1 extending the Encounter.

– Draw 1 card.

– This is a unique Bonus Key as it's checked before any other Keys. If a card you want to play is not the first card played this turn, it must be able to gain this Bonus. Gaining multiple instances of this Bonus does not have any additional effect and if multiplied by 0x it isn't gained.

Other Diplomacy Rules

Panic

Panic takes place anytime your Character is Going Insane (a marker is in the red slot of Terror track on the Character Tray).

When that happens:

- During step 2 of your Activation, instead of playing the first card from your hand, place the top card from your deck at the end of the Sequence and resolve it. Then, any additional cards may be played from your hand, according to the standard rules (they require a Bonus).
- Do not draw cards at the End Turn phase. Any additional cards drawn from Bonus Keys, Skills, or Abilities are still drawn as normal.

You Are Dying!

Whenever a Character's drops to 0, the Character receives a "You Are Dying" card. Among other rules, the card immediately removes the Character from the current Encounter – see its text for more details. Other Party members continue the Encounter.

Discarding from an Empty Hand

Whenever you must discard a card from your hand, but you don't have any, discard a card from the top of your Diplomacy deck instead.

Moving the Marker Beyond the Final Affinity Slot

The marker on the Affinity track can never be lower than the bottom Affinity slot or higher than the top Affinity slot.

Whenever an enemy Response or another effect asks you to ⬇ the marker below the bottom Affinity slot, the last Active Character discards 1 card from the top of their Diplomacy deck for each ⬇ instead.

Whenever an enemy Response or another effect asks you to ⬆ the marker above the top Affinity slot, nothing happens.

For Example: The marker on the Affinity track is on the second slot from the bottom. The enemy Response is ⬇⬇⬇. The marker on the Affinity track moves to the last Affinity slot, then the last Active Character discards 2 cards from the top of their Diplomacy deck.

Empty Deck

Whenever a Character should draw a card from their Diplomacy deck and there are not enough cards, nothing happens – draw as much as possible and simply continue the Encounter.

Diplomacy Traits

Many Encounters possess one or more Traits that will influence the Diplomacy. Here's a list of common Traits:

Discouraging – When you Avoid, always resolve .

Dread – Before , if you have 1 or fewer cards in hand, gain 1.

Greedy – At the start of the Diplomacy, pay 1 Wealth or gain 1.

Harass (X-Y) – Effect – Before , if there are at least X, but no more than Y cards in the Sequence, resolve the corresponding Effect.

Haste – You may play at most 3 cards during your Activation.

Diplomacy Affinity Tracker

Instead of moving along the Affinity track, you can use Diplomacy Affinity tracker provided with Tainted Grail: Kings of Ruin. At the start of the Encounter, slide the tracker on the Starting slot of the Affinity track and move it up and down whenever you resolve ⬆ and ⬇.

COMBAT EXAMPLE

Iunis is in a Party with Elgan and they draw a green Encounter – a horrific Wyrdbear! The Party feels strong enough and decides to take up the challenge.

Starting Combat

All Party members draw 3 cards from their Combat decks and decide to leave them as their starting hands.

Turn 1

The Party decides that Iunis will be the first Active Character, so she puts a Time marker ⧗ on her Character Tray.

The first card played in a player's Activation may be any card from their hand, so Iunis decides to play *Trade Blows*. She has 2 points of ✊, so the connected ✊ Key grants a Bonus of ●, which is placed in the Combat Pool. No other connected Keys gain her any Bonuses, so she resolves the On Placement Ability of the card and decides to pay 3 ♥ to gain ●● and places them in the Combat Pool. Paying 3 ♥ allows her to also draw a card. Another Ability listed on this card has an After ☠ effect, which means it will trigger After the Enemy Attack, not now. Iunis decides to not play any additional cards. Now, it's time for the Enemy Attack.

The last Active Character applies the Attack from the Combat table of the Encounter card. There are ●● in the Combat Pool, which means that the Wyrdbear deals 3 ⚔ to Iunis and removes 1 marker from the Combat Pool. Next, Iunis examines the After ☠ ability, which features a ✋ icon. It means the last card in the Sequence must be discarded. In this case it's the card with the icon, so Iunis discards *Trade Blows* from the Sequence.

Elgan has to be the next Active Character, so he marks that with the ⧗.

Elgan plays *Poisonous Candle* and gains none of the Bonuses from connected Keys, because he doesn't have points in ✊ and the closing half of the Free Key is empty. Next, the player resolves the On Placement Ability of the card, which instructs Elgan to place 3 ⧗ on it. This card has a Delayed Ability that can be recognized by the ⧗ icon on the card. After the last ⧗ is removed, this Ability will be resolved, placing ●● in the Combat Pool.

Then, Elgan decides to play an additional card – *Spark*. He may do so because the card has a ⚡ Bonus, which when gained, allows that card to be played after the first card of the Activation. Elgan has 1 ✊, so the Bonus can be gained. The player pays 1 **Magic** to gain the ■ Bonus and places ● in the Combat Pool. He then uses the On Placement Ability to remove 1 ⧗ from *Poisonous Candle*, so that the Delayed Ability would trigger faster. There are still 2 more ⧗ on the card, so the Ability can't be resolved yet.

The Enemy attacks, dealing 3 ⚔ to Elgan, as there are ●● in the Pool. After that, ● is removed again.

Players Check Readiness and as every Party member has a ⧗ on their Character Tray, they proceed to the End Turn. They don't need to discard any cards, as none has more than 3 cards in hand. Next, they draw 1 card each from their Combat decks. Everyone removes ⧗ from their Character Trays and the new Turn begins.

Turn 2

Party members decide that Iunis will again be the first Active Character, so she marks that with a ⧗ on her Character Tray.

Wyrdbear
Poisonous Candle
Spark
Place 3 ⧗ on this card.
Gain
You may place 2 ⧗ on, or remove 1 ⧗ from a card. If you removed the last ⧗, resolve ⧗ normally.
Opportunity: 1
Loot: 3 Food.
1/10 B
5/10 B

Previously, the Delayed Abilities step was skipped, since there were no cards with ⧗ in the Sequence. But it's different this time, so Iunis removes 1⧗ from *Poisonous Candle*. There is still 1⧗ left on it though, so nothing happens yet.

Then Iunis proceeds to play her first card during this Activation – *Flurry of Blows*. Only the grants a Bonus of , so she places it in the Combat Pool. Resolving the On Placement Ability, Iunis decides to gain 1 to place a charge on the card.

She decides to play another card – *Throw*, using the Bonus granted by the Key. She also gains a Bonus of from the Free Key, which she places in the Combat Pool. The On Placement Ability of that card can't be used because Iunis doesn't have a Weapon or Shield.

Players proceed to the Wyrdbear attack...

...as there are 6 in the Pool, a new attack is applied. before the means that the damage is dealt to everyone in the Party, so everyone must move the Health marker 1 slot down on their track. One is once again removed from the Combat Pool, leaving the beast with . After the Attack, Iunis must discard *Throw*, as per the Ability on the card.

Now, it's time for Elgan to be the Active Character. He puts ⧗ on his Character Tray.

First of all, Elgan checks the Delayed Ability, and removes the last ⧗ that is left on the *Poisonous Candle*. That means the Ability is triggered, which adds to the Combat Pool. There were before that, so it adds up to 8 and equals the Encounter Value.

Congratulations! The Wyrdbear is defeated and the Encounter immediately ends. The Party now collects the Loot listed at the bottom of the Encounter card. The Party gains 3 **Food** that may be distributed freely between the Characters. They put the Encounter at the bottom of the green Encounter deck, return all Combat cards (from hand, Sequence, and discard) to their Combat decks and shuffle them.

DIPLOMACY EXAMPLE

Osbert is in a Party with Gerdwyn and they draw a blue Encounter – a really drunk Drunken Knight. The Party looks at the man and decides that they can talk him out pretty easily.

Starting Diplomacy

At the start of a Diplomacy Encounter, the Party needs to set a Duration die. They put it above the Encounter card with the number shown on the top of the card next to the icon – in this case 3. They also place a universal marker in the starting slot of the Affinity track, marked with S.

All Party members draw 3 cards from their Diplomacy decks and decide to leave them as their starting hands.

Turn 1

The Party decides that Gerdwyn will be the first Active Character, so she puts a Time marker on her Character Tray.

The first card played in a player's Activation may be any card from their hand, so Gerdwyn decides to play *Impatience*. The Free Key grants a Bonus of , which means that Gerdwyn moves the marker one slot up on the Affinity track. The On Placement Ability of *Impatience* instructs Gerdwyn to place 2 universal markers, that represents charges, on the card. She may use them later to discard () a card from the Sequence.

Gerdwyn decides to play another card – *Stern Command*. She can do so because the card has a Bonus, which can be gained since Gerdwyn has 1. No other connected Keys gain her any Bonuses, so she resolves the On Placement Ability of the card. The Affinity is , so she decides to lose 1 and she does it by setting the Duration die to 2. *Stern Command* also has an Ability that will trigger after this card is , so let's do it now.

Gerdwyn pays 1 charge from the *Impatience* card and discards *Stern Command* to her discard pile. The Ability is triggered, allowing her to move the marker 1 slot up the Affinity track. Gerdwyn doesn't want to play more cards, so she proceeds to the Enemy Response step.

Now, it's time for Drunken Knight to Respond. The last Active Character applies the Response from the right side of the Diplomacy table with above it. Gerdwyn moves the marker one slot down on the Affinity track (), discards the last card from the Sequence, which will be *Impatience*, and sets the Duration die on 1.

Osbert has to be the next Active Character, so he marks that with the on his Character Tray.

Osbert is a gambler, so the first card he plays is *Risky Bet*. The Key and Free Key both grant a Bonus, so Osbert moves the marker two slots up on the Affinity track. It's now on . This means that the On Placement Ability of the Risky Bet can be triggered and Osbert decides to take the opportunity – Osbert gains 2 **Wealth** and moves the marker to the S slot.

Now they have to convince the Knight all over again and the time is running out, so Osbert plays another card – *Path of Harmony*, by gaining the Bonus from the Key. The On Placement Ability gives Osbert a choice and he decides that he will and gain 1 – he sets the Duration die to 2.

Osbert decides that's enough, so the Enemy responds, moving the marker one slot down on the Affinity track, discarding the last card in the Sequence, and losing 1.

Players Check Readiness and as every Party member has a on their Character Tray, they proceed to the End of Turn. They don't need to discard any cards, as none has more than 3 cards in hand. Next, they draw 1 card each from their Diplomacy decks. Everyone removes from their Character Trays and the new Turn begins.

Turn 2

The Party members decide that Osbert will be the first Active Character this time, so he marks that with a ⧗ on his Character Tray.

The Delayed Abilities step is skipped again, since there are no cards with ⧗ in the Sequence.

Then, Osbert proceeds to play his first card during this Activation – *Stroke of Luck*. The Key Bonus gains 1 , so, Osbert sets the Duration die to 2. To resolve the On Placement Ability, he needs to roll a die. The result is 4 and Osbert picks the ↑ option – the marker goes 1 slot up on the track.

Next, he plays *Coin Trick* using the fact that he can gain the Bonus from the Key. He pays 1 **Magic** to gain the Bonus and moves the marker 2 slots up the track. Once again there is a choice to make within the On Placement Ability, and as he doesn't want to pay anything to anyone, he decides to lose 1 – the die is set to 1.

Osbert has one more card in his hand – *Haggling*, that he plays using the Bonus in the Key. This card's Ability will trigger during the Enemy Response step, which is marked with the icon.

Now, it's time for the Enemy Response. But there is no Response this time, as *Haggling's* Ability says to "Ignore the Enemy Response". This card must be discarded after , so Osbert does it.

Now, it's time for Gerdwyn to be the Active Character. She puts ⧗ on her Character Tray.

The first card she plays is *Intimidation* and gains the Free Key Bonus, which moves the marker 2 slots up the Affinity track. Resolving the On Placement Ability, she discards the card she's just played and Osbert's *Coin Trick*. Gerdwyn thinks that it's enough talking and proceeds to the Enemy Response step.

The Drunken Knight's response moves the marker 1 slot down, discards the *Stroke of Luck* and loses the duration completely, which means that the Encounter comes to an end.

Congratulations! The marker is on , so the Party gets the reward corresponding to that Affinity from the Conclusion section. They managed to gain 2 **Wealth** from the Drunken Knight, so they distribute it between Party members. They put the Encounter at the bottom of the blue Encounter deck, return all Diplomacy cards (from hand, Sequence, and discard) to their Diplomacy decks and shuffle them.

Alternative Modes

Below, you can find recommended ways to decrease (or increase) the difficulty of your campaign.

Story Mode

Surviving in Western Avalon isn't easy! If you or your friends want a more relaxed experience and would prefer to simply enjoy the story without the constant fear of failing, consider applying any of the following modifiers. You may decide to use all or only some of them.

Starting Items

During "IV) Prepare the Secret and Items decks" of the World Setup on page 6, each Character gains **1** Item "A."

Tactical Genius

Gain Secret card **49**. It allows you to play additional cards during your turn without gaining the Bonus, so you can build your Sequence more easily.

Encounters and Events

Whenever you prepare Encounter decks at the start of the Chapter or whenever the game requires you to place Random Events on top of the Event deck, treat the number of Characters in the game as if there were 1 Character fewer (min. 1).

Health Limiter

Remove the marker plastic piece from the game and mark with a regular marker instead. Your no longer limts your .

Waystone Cost

Change the additional costs of "Activate a waystone" Action to:

- Pay 1 Magic per Character.
- Pay the "Blood Price." Pay 2 per Character and gain 1 per Character.

In both cases, the cost remains the same.

Character Advancement

Whenever you Advance your Combat or Diplomacy deck, draw one more card to choose from.

Passage of Time

During each Chapter, when you would gain one or more parts of the "**Time Passes**" status for the first time, gain one part fewer.

Challenge Mode

If your group wants an extra challenge and already knows the game well, you might want to increase the difficulty further. In that case, use the rule modifications listed below that lead to a more unforgiving and challenging experience.

Remember: For an intermediate experience, you may decide to apply only some of these changes!

Empowered Encounters

Gain Secret card **48**. It adds an additional effect to each Enemy Attack and Response.

Escaping Combat and Avoiding Diplomacy

After the Enemy Attack, if you're Escaping, roll a die:

1-3: You remain in Combat!

4-6: You successfully Escape.

Whenever you Avoid Diplomacy, resolve the (unless the Encounter says otherwise).

Events

Whenever the game requires you to place any Random Event cards on top of the Event deck, treat the number of Characters in the game as if there were 1 Character more.

Waystone Cost

The "Activate a waystone" Action additionally costs 1 per Character. This affects both normal payment and the "Blood Price."

Character Advancement

Instead of the standard Experience costs (see: "Attributes & Character Advancement" on page 13), use the list below:

3 Exp ⇨ Draw 2 Combat or 2 Diplomacy cards from your Advancement Pool. Choose one, put the other back, and shuffle the Pool.

3 Exp + 1 Exp for each point in a pair of opposing Attributes ⇨ point in that Attribute pair.

5 Exp + 5 Exp for each Skill in a pair of opposing Attributes ⇨ Skill in that Attribute pair.

Items

You may carry up to 5 Items (Secrets do not count).

Classic Resting

Change the rules of Recovery during End of the Day:

- Each Character MUST pay 1 Food during each Recovery. They gain 1 and lose 1 as normal, but they don't gain an additional 1 .
- For each Character that does not pay 1 Food during Recovery:
  - If they were Exhausted this turn, they lose 1 .
  - If they were not Exhausted this turn, they place their marker on value 4 slot of the Energy track.

Limited Stability

Whenever you gain part of the "**Time Passes**" status, Fade a waystone farthest from all Characters.

Secret Rules

Death

If you have Secret card **6**, **8**, or **9**, when any Character dies, the Kingseeker's Brand will slowly regenerate their body, before pushing them back on their Quest. To achieve that, the Brand taps into the life force of other nearby Kingseekers, leaving them traumatized by the process.

When your Character is at 0 and meets the death conditions listed on the "You Are Dying" card, perform the following steps:

- Each other Character in the game loses 1 and gains 2.
- Gain one part of the "**Time Passes**" status appropriate for your current Chapter.
- You gain 4 (remember to discard the "You Are Dying" card).
- All Characters place their marker on the "0" slot.
- If there are no waystones on the board, read Verse 1100 in the Book of Secrets in the Exploration Journal.

IMPORTANT: Relying on higher powers to keep you alive is not an intended way to play! If you keep dying, consider using the Story Mode (see: "Alternative Modes" on page 36).

Companions

While playing Tainted Grail: Kings of Ruin, you will meet some exciting and varied Companions. It's up to you whether they will accompany you on your adventure. Each of them has a unique, small personal story and special abilities. Will they help you or hinder you?

The Black Goat of the Moors

The demonic Black Goat is perhaps an unexpected but helpful companion – if you ignore her strange origin. The Goat follows after Food, so it will gladly accompany you if you have some. Each day you can check the enchanted pouches and bags the Goat's carrying for a small find. Oh, and hugging the animal to sleep may help you remain sane.

If the Black Goat is in your Location and you happen to engage in Combat, Goat may help you for a price. Getting is a once per Combat Action, so regardless of the number of Party members, the Goat can only attack an Enemy once. But with enough food supplies, you can use it multiple times during the Day.

Kendrick, the Ghostly Scholar

This friendly ghost, who firmly believes he is not a ghost at all, may join you for most of your adventure. His academic background is useful if you want to learn more about some of the game's Locations, or if you are lost on your current Quest.

Important: When you choose to "Ask for help with your current Quest," Kendrick will provide some pretty detailed hints. If you want to figure out things on your own, it's better to avoid using this Action.

Performing the "Find out more about this place" Action may give you more information about the place you are currently in, or help you discover new Location interactions.

Whenever you and Kendrick end up in the same Location, it's a good idea to check whether its art also contains one of Western Avalon's forgotten and dilapidated Menhirs. In rare places like that, Kendrick may bestow some magic upon you. Check this visual example to see which terrain feature you should look for.

The Candle Golem

This helpful ally is essentially a walking, living Wyrdcandle that lights up the wyrdness. But the more you use it, the more of Golem's personal story you will reveal as its parts melt away.

The Candle Golem's Action can't be immediately reused. You must perform the "Activate a Waystone" Action to recharge the construct's power.

Isolut the Goldmasked

This noble girl is a stark contrast to many grim travelers who populate Avalon's trails. She's unshakably optimistic and likes to sing happy songs in the least opportune moments.

If Isolut is in your Location, and you engage in an Encounter, she may help, allowing you to ignore the Enemy Attack or Response once per Encounter. Since it's not a once-per-day effect, Isolut can even help you in multiple Encounters during the day.

Important: Having Isolut also makes reading Visions in each Location where you stay overnight mandatory – for story reasons that will be revealed as you travel with her.

The Fox God

At a random point in the campaign, the Fox God will approach you, very interested in you and your mission. He's a capricious being and won't follow you around like other Companions. Instead, he often disappears for days on end. However, if you appease him with small offerings, he might grant you various boons.

This Companion is the only one you won't discover through the Exploration Journal – instead, he makes an entrance randomly using the Event deck.

If you decide to interact with the Fox God, he will start appearing in different places and require different offerings. Beware: if you decide to ignore him after presenting an initial offering, you may fall victim to one of his curses.

Wyrdforms

At some point of your adventure, you will receive Wyrdform cards, Skill, a Character tile, and model. They reflect how your Character is changing due to prolonged exposure to the wyrdness.

Wyrdform Character Tile

When your form changes, so does your Character' Ability and Weakness. As long as you remain in Wyrdform, you have to use the new tile you've just received.

Wyrdform Cards

These cards can be easily distinguished from others thanks to their unique white colors and letter "W" in the card number on the bottom of the card.

These cards introduce some important new rules:

Deck modification

Once gained, all Wyrdform cards **must** be included in Characters' decks at all times and can't be removed from the deck unless specifically allowed. They count towards the limit of 10 cards minimum in your deck.

Cost

Each Wyrdform card has an additional cost shown below its name. During Encounters, to play a Wyrdform card from hand, the Active player must be able to first cover the card's cost (paying , , , or Magic) The cost must be paid in full before the card is resolved. It means that if a Character is unable to gain , or lose shown on the card in full, the card cannot be played.

For Example: If a given Character is already at the highest value of their Terror track, they cannot play a card with a cost.

Note: Some effects like Panic place cards from the top of your deck or discard pile at the end of the Sequence. In such cases ignore the Wyrdform card cost as they are not played from hand.

Wyrdform Skills

Those Skills offer you a new approach to dealing with Encounters. They are distinguishable by their whitened frame.

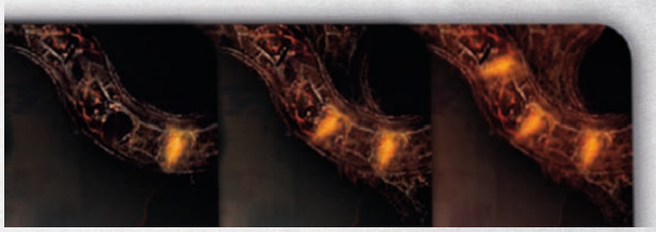
As long as you're in Wyrdform, you'll have 1 Wyrdform Skill. For advancement cost they count toward the amount of Skills in a given Attribute pair, but they also allow you to gain a 5th point of a given Attribute.

Note: To connect properly, they should be kept as the outer token. Whenever you gain a new Skill of the same Attribute, swap their place, and move the Attribute marker from the Wyrdform Skill to a new Skill.

Kings of Ruin

Kings of Ruin are Boss-like Encounters you will meet during your playthrough. Each comes with 6 oversized Encounter cards that represent their 3 Diplomacy and 3 Combat Encounters.

Each such card represents an Encounter with a given King at a different stage of the game. Boss Encounter's Difficulty is indicated by the icon found in the top right corner:



Each time you meet a King of Ruin, the game will clearly tell you which card should be used to resolve the Encounter.

Kings of Ruin will also frequently appear on the board. Their rules are similar to Guardian rules, but slightly modified to fit their personal agenda. When a King of Ruin is placed on the board, a special rules card will always be provided with them, as a rules reminder, but the details can only be found in the rulebook.

Lastly, each King of Ruin will introduce their own unique mechanic during Combat and Diplomacy Encounters. This mechanic will also be used by some other Encounters related to that King, such as their followers. The description of each mechanic can be found in the Section corresponding to a King of Ruin, but should not be read until the player meets the King (or a follower) that uses the mechanic.

Additionally, some rules will change between Difficulty 1, 2, and 3 of each King of Ruin.

Claudyne, the Unknighted

Movement

When Claudyne is present on the board, he moves around similarly to Guardians.

During the Start of the Day, right after moving the Guardians, roll the Guardian die for Claudyne.

1. Cardinal direction – move *Claudyne the Unknighted* to the connected Location in the direction indicated by the die. If there's no connected Location in this direction, move him to the lowest-numbered connected Location instead.

Note: This King of Ruin moves in the opposite direction to Guardians.

2. "X" – Resolve both, in the following order:

- If there is a waystone in any corners of the Location with *Claudyne the Unknighted*, Fade it (if there is more than 1 waystone, Fade the one that touches the highest-numbered Location first).
- Move *Claudyne the Unknighted* by 2 Locations toward the closest Character. If more Characters are at the same distance, Claudyne moves to the Character in the lowest-numbered Location.

At any moment of the game, if any Character is in the same Location as *Claudyne the Unknighted*, the Encounter starts immediately (before resolving ⚡ effects) – 📖 Book of Secrets Verse **200**.

Claudyne Encounter Rules

Claudyne's unique mechanic introduces Enemy Combat and Diplomacy cards. At the start of an Encounter, you will create a face down Claudyne's deck, according to the instructions provided by the Exploration Journal.

Throughout the Encounter, they will be placed at the end of the Sequence according to the Encounter's Trait. This Trait may differ between a Claudyne Encounter or his followers.

Impact – Effect

After the Delayed Abilities step, remove 1 📜 from the *Claudyne the Unknighted* card. When the last 📜 is removed from it, resolve the Effect attached to this Trait.

Enemy Combat and Diplomacy cards function the same as any other player's Combat and Diplomacy cards. They are placed in the Sequence and may provide Bonuses when placed. They don't count as the first card played during Character's Activation but otherwise function as normal – their Abilities are active as long as those cards remain visible in the Sequence.

When discarded, enemy Combat and Diplomacy cards are simply placed back into the Secret deck, or may be kept aside until the Encounter ends, as they may be used more than once during the same Encounter.

Claudyne's Deck and Reshuffle

When you are asked to place a card from Claudyne's deck, but the deck is empty, perform the following instead:

- Shuffle all cards from the Sequence and discard piles into corresponding decks.
- Recreate Claudyne's deck in the same order as described in a Verse that started the Encounter.
- Place 1 📜 on the Encounter card.
- Each Party member loses 1 ❤ and gains 1 ❤.

Kings of Ruin and Guardians

Even though Kings of Ruin share a lot of core rules with Guardians, they are NOT considered Guardians for the purpose of any game effects.

Reshuffle

Shuffling the whole Sequence by the Boss does not resolve the 🎴 effects.

Amberqueen Veneda

Movement

During the Start of the Day, right after moving the Guardians, if Secret card **160** is in play and you have the "**Notable Deeds**" part **7** status, roll the Guardian die for Veneda:

1. Cardinal direction – move *Amberqueen Veneda* to the connected Location in the direction indicated by the die. If there's no connected Location in this direction, move her to the highest-numbered connected Location instead.

2. "X" – Resolve both, in the following order:
• If there is a waystone in any corners of Location with *Amberqueen Veneda*, Fade it (if there is more than 1 waystone, Fade the one that touches the highest-numbered Location first).
• If there's no *Amberwitch* Encounter in play, place Secret card **233** (*Amberwitch* purple Encounter, Difficulty 3) in the highest-numbered connected Location. Otherwise, roll the Guardian die for *Amberwitch* and apply its effect.

At any moment of the game, if any Character is in the same Location as *Amberqueen Veneda*, the Encounter starts immediately (before resolving effects) – Book of Secrets Verse indicated by Secret card **160** or **174**.

Amberspawns

Encounters with Veneda and her kin are accompanied by one or more Amberspawns which will help your enemies. Boss Encounters will specify how to create a special Veneda's deck with Amberspawns in the Exploration Journal. Normal Encounters will start with an Amberspawn determined by their Trait.

In order to defeat Amberspawns, you will have to place on them. The way to place will differ slightly between Combat and Diplomacy.

1. Value. You need to place that many on this Amberspawn in order to defeat it.

2. Trait. Some Amberspawns have a unique Trait that changes some Encounter rules.

3. Combat or Diplomacy table. Depending on the current amount of on a given Amberspawn, it will assist Veneda in some way.

4. Loot. Additional reward received after defeating Amberspawn.

When resolving the Enemy Attack, treat all effects in Amberspawns Combat and Diplomacy tables the same way you treat effects on Items or Combat and Diplomacy cards.

When the amount of on Amberspawn is equal to its Value, it is immediately defeated. Gain it's Loot. Then, if you're fighting Veneda, place that Amberspawn in the discard pile next to Veneda's deck. If you're fighting a normal Encounter, return that Amberspawn to the Secrets.

Combat

During Combat, each time you gain , you may instead place on a chosen Amberspawn. You can't remove those from Amberspawns in any way.

Diplomacy

During Diplomacy, each time you , you may instead place on any Amberspawn. You can't remove those from Amberspawns in any way.

Veneda Encounter Rules

Amberspawning

After resolving all Delayed Abilities in the Sequence, place the top card of Veneda's deck (Amberspawn) in play, next to her. Then, place 1 on *Amberqueen Veneda*.

Whenever you are instructed to place the top card of Veneda's deck into play and Veneda's deck is empty, only place 1 on *Amberqueen Veneda*.

Transformative Combat and Diplomacy Table

Veneda's Actions are dependent on the amount of on her card. During Diplomacy, Veneda's whole Response will change. During Combat, you will encounter effects like , which means Veneda will deal equal to the amount of currently placed on her.

Reshuffle

When you are instructed to Reshuffle, flip all discarded Amberspawns and place them at the bottom of Veneda's deck (so that the first defeated Amberspawn should reappear earlier). Then, shuffle all cards from the Sequence and discard piles into corresponding decks. Then, each Party member loses 1 and gains 1.

Difficulty 2 Veneda

Reshuffle

During Encounters with Difficulty 2 Veneda, when you are instructed to Reshuffle, only shuffle all cards from the Sequence and discard piles into the corresponding decks. Then, each Party member loses 1 and gains 1. Do not rebuild Veneda's deck.

Nonus, Bishop of the Deep

Movement

During the Start of the Day, right after moving the Guardians, Nonus may move according to Secret card **175** or **189** in one of the following ways:

With Secret card **175** in play:

If Nonus is in a Location with a , place him in the next Location with the in ascending Location number order. If he is in the highest-numbered Location with a , place him in the lowest-numbered Location with a .

With Secret card **175** or **189** in play:

Roll the Guardian die for Nonus:

1. Cardinal direction – move Nonus to the connected Location in the direction indicated by the die. If there's no connected Location in this direction, move Nonus to the lowest-numbered connected Location instead.

Note: This King of Ruin moves in the opposite direction to Guardians.

2. "X" – Resolve both, in the following order:

- If there is a waystone in any corners of Location with *Nonus, Bishop of the Deep*, Fade it (if there is more than 1 waystone, Fade the one that touches the lowest-numbered Location first).
- Place Secret card **176** (*Chaotic Weather* Random Event) in the Active Events area, if it's not already there.

At any moment of the game, if any Character is in the same Location as *Nonus, Bishop of the Deep*, immediately Book of Secrets Verse indicated by Secret card **175** or **189**.

Weather Cards

Encounters with Nonus and his kin change the weather around them, influencing the state of the Encounter.

1. Character modifier. Combat Weathers will change the Attributes requirements. Diplomacy Weathers add additional effects to Bonuses.
2. Encounter modifier. Weathers may give Encounters additional Traits or modify the Enemy Attack and Response.
3. Duration. Each Weather will only last a few Turns. When the last is removed from a Weather card, it will be replaced with new one.

Nonus Encounter rules

Weathershifter

This Trait announces that the Encounter will use Nonus's Weather deck. Boss Encounters will specify which cards are used in the Exploration Journal. Normal Encounters will have Secret cards specified with the Trait: "Weathershifter (**X**,**Y**)". They should be stacked with Card **X** on top and Card **Y** on bottom, creating a face down deck.

After the Delayed Abilities step of the first Activation, place the top Weather face up near the Encounter and resolve its effect.

After the last is removed from the current Weather, discard it and draw the top Weather from the deck. If the Weather deck is empty, first shuffle all discarded Weather cards and create a new Weather deck.

Weather Deck and Reshuffle

Whenever you shuffle the Weather deck during a Nonus Encounter, shuffle all cards from the Sequence and discard piles into corresponding decks.

Then, each Party member loses 1 and gains 1 .

Final Boss Encounter Rules

During the final Encounter against each Boss, the rules differ slightly. The Boss's deck will be built differently and sometimes it will change during the Encounter.

Diplomatic Encounter

In these Encounters, does NOT end the Encounter. When resolving this Conclusion, you simply apply its effect.

Escaping, Avoiding, and Failing the Encounter

You aren't allowed to Escape/Avoid these Encounters but you can Fail them. If your Character's is reduced to 0, you gain the "You Are Dying!" card and are removed from the Encounter normally.

If all Party members are Dying, or you feel you no longer stand a chance, Book of Secrets Verse found on your Encounter card near "Fail."

Encounter Timelapse

As these Encounters progress, you will be able to read a few story scenes. They introduce some gameplay changes to the Encounter but you aren't required to resolve all of them in order to finish the Encounter.

Additionally, during *Nonus, Bishop of the Deep* and *Amberqueen Veneda* Encounters, after each story scene you will be asked to set a die to a specific side (use a d6). This marks your progress through the Encounter and its only purpose is to correctly redirect you through the Journal. If you have to roll a die for any other game effect during this Encounter, remember to place this die after the roll to the correct side back on the Encounter card.

Component Spoilers

The following cards are part of Open & Play deck. If you ever want to recreate it, do it in the following order:

- 1 Open & Play cover
- 10 Gerdwyn Basic Combat cards stacked from 1(top) to 10 (bottom)
- 10 Gerdwyn Basic Diplomacy cards stacked from 1(top) to 10 (bottom)
- 1 Large Wyrdrat – Your First green Encounter card
- 1 Rowdy Peasant – Your First blue Encounter card
- 1 Glowing Moth – Your First purple Encounter card

The following components are hidden at the start of the game:

- 4 Wyrdform Character tiles (in Secret Envelope)
- 4 Wyrdform Skill tokens (in Secret Envelope)
- 1 Blue Color Filter (in a secret compartment under the box insert).

Credits

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RULES SUMMARY

Order of the Day

I. Start of the Day

1. Resolve Start of the Day effects.
2. Remove 1 and 1 from each card.
3. Flip Locations that don't touch a waystone to the side.
4. Roll for each Guardian.
   - Cardinal direction – move that Guardian to a connected Location in the direction indicated by the die. If there's no connected Location in this direction, move the Guardian to the highest-numbered connected Location instead.
   - "X" – Resolve the first that applies:
     - If there is a Character in a Location with the Guardian – resolve an Encounter with it.
     - If there is a waystone in any corner of this Location, Fade it.
     - Move that Guardian to the highest-numbered connected Location.
5. Clear Active Events Area (except).
6. Reveal and read a new Event card.

II. During the Day

Players perform Actions in any order until everyone decides to End the Day.

III. End of the Day

1. Resolve End of the Day effects.
2. Rest – If you are Exhausted, gain 4, otherwise place your marker on the starting slot (remember your can't surpass your marker).
3. Recover – You may pay 1 **Food** once to gain 1, 1, and lose 1.
4. Suffer from Wyrdness – If you're in a Location, lose 2 and gain 2.
5. Advance your Character by spending **Exp** – You may gain Skills, cards, and raise Attributes.
6. Modify your decks – Each deck must constist of at least 10 cards.
7. If you're in a Location with the icon, you may read the Vision at the end of your Location part of Exploration Journal.
8. Start the next Day (go to Stage 1).

Combat/Diplomacy

Starting Combat/Diplomacy

- Each Party member draws 3 cards from their deck. You may Redraw.
- In Diplomacy:
  - Set the die to the number indicated by the Encounter Duration ().
  - Place a universal marker on the starting slot (marked with S) of the Affinity track.
- Check the enemy Traits.

I. Pick the Active Character – Place 1 on the Tray of the Character that becomes Active.

II. Character Activation

1. Delayed Abilities – remove 1 from each Combat card, and if you removed the last one, resolve effect.
2. Playing cards – play one or more cards from your hand (additional cards must be able to gain a Bonus in order to be played).

- In Combat:
  - If you didn't play any cards, resolve the Opportunity attack.
  - You may Escape at any time ⇨ proceed to phase III and then end the Encounter.
- In Diplomacy:
  - You may Avoid at any time ⇨ and lose all .

III. Enemy Attack/Response

- Resolve the Attack/Response on the Encounter card.

IV. Check Readiness

- If each Party member Activated (has on their Tray), go to phase V (End Turn). If not, go back to phase I (Pick the Active Character).

V. End Turn

- Discard – Each Party member discards down to 3 cards in hand.
- Draw – Each Party member draws 1 card (). Party members that Panic skip this step.
- Clear Activations – Remove all from the Character Trays.
- Start a new Turn – go to phase I (Pick the Active Character).

Ending the Encounter

During Combat – when the amount of in the Combat Pool equals the Encounter Value, you win and receive Loot!

During Diplomacy – when the last point is lost, resolve the Conclusion and end the Encounter.

Death, Escape and Run Away

If you've gained the "You Are Dying" card, Escaped, or forced the Encounter to Run Away, you end the Encounter but you don't gain any Loot.

Encounter cleanup

If you've lost against a Guardian Encounter (), place its standee in your Location. Otherwise, place the Encounter card on the bottom of its deck (if the Encounter card came from the Secret deck or from the box, return it there instead). Then, shuffle all Combat decks, including any cards in hand, Sequence, and discard. Remove all from the Character Trays. If this Encounter happened during Exploration, continue it now, applying any additional effects if necessary.

Panic

Panic takes place anytime your Character is Going Insane. When that happens:

- During step 2 of your Activation, instead of playing the first card from your hand, you place the top card from your deck at the end of the Sequence and resolve it. Then, any additional cards may be played from your hand, according to the standard rules.
- Skip during the End Turn phase.

Discarding cards from the top of the Combat/Diplomacy deck

These effects cause you to discard one or more top cards of your deck:

- Whenever you must discard a card from your hand, but you don't have any.
- Whenever would be lost from the Combat Pool, and there aren't any, the last Active Character discards that many cards.
- Whenever an effect would below the bottom of the Affinity track, the last Active Character discards that many cards.

No cards in deck

Whenever a Character should draw a card from their Combat or Diplomacy deck and there are not enough cards, nothing happens – draw as much as possible and simply continue the Encounter.